

Elland House School

Unit 7, Roman Road, Royton, Lancashire OL2 5PJ

Inspection dates

18–20 October 2016

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Adequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The dedicated head of education is ambitious for the school. Her determination and excellent leadership, combined with strong governance, has ensured continual improvement since the previous inspection.
- All pupils make good progress from their different starting points because the school provides each one of them with an effective, unique personalised learning programme.
- Teaching is good. Teachers generally capture pupils' interests well, with interesting and often demanding activities. Occasionally the level of challenge is not high enough.
- The school has a very effective assessment system so that pupils' progress can be measured accurately and teaching tailored precisely to their needs.
- All staff are highly committed to pupils' learning and well-being. A palpable ethos of nurturing and care permeates this fully inclusive school. All pupils and their families and carers are warmly welcomed and supported.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have a good understanding about the forms bullying can take. They have a good knowledge about keeping safe, including when using social media. The school works closely with external partners to reduce all forms of risk.
- The school puts a good emphasis on developing pupils' progress in the key skills of English, mathematics and information technology. A wealth of experiences gained from trips and visits gives pupils a deeper understanding of the world and their future as British citizens. Pupils have a limited range of vocational learning opportunities.
- The proprietor, business manager and head of education are meticulous in ensuring that the independent school standards are met. They provide effective support and challenge to all staff.

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?

- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - ensuring that learning activities consistently stretch and challenge pupils of all abilities, and particularly the most able.
 - broadening the curriculum to provide more vocational learning opportunities for pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The leadership of the head of education, well supported by governors, has secured strong improvement since the previous inspection. Leaders have set high expectations for all aspects of the school's work. The school's mission is to break down barriers to learning and to try to return pupils to mainstream education as soon as possible; leaders are successful in this aim.
- Leaders and governors ensure that all the independent school standards are met.
- Teaching and learning have improved because leaders have provided effective training for staff. The school makes good use of the strengths of staff in both schools owned by the company, and they share expertise.
- Leaders set challenging targets for all staff and, through a rigorous system of performance management, they ensure that any relative weaknesses are identified and addressed.
- The head of education has established a comprehensive new system of assessment so that pupils' starting points are accurately measured and their progress is tracked. These assessments help teachers to plan work which is suited to the needs of each individual pupil, and this results in pupils making good progress.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders' precise understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school enable them to make effective decisions to bring about improvement.
- The school ensures that the funding for disadvantaged pupils improves outcomes for them. Funding is successfully used as necessary to provide home tutoring, additional individual support for pupils preparing for GCSE examinations, access to computer courses and opportunities for pupils to take part in many enrichment activities.
- The curriculum places an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills and also ensures that pupils receive a broad range of learning opportunities in other subject areas such as the humanities, science and technology. Pupils enjoy weekly community visits to museums, religious centres, places of historic interest and sporting venues. For example, this term pupils have already visited a textile museum, Ordsall Hall and the Roman remains at Castlefield in Manchester.
- Great emphasis is put on developing an understanding of what it means to be a British citizen. Pupils visit Parliament and the local council offices, museums and many other places which broaden their horizons and provide a sense of British identity. Membership of the school council provides pupils with a real experience of democracy in action.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning is at the heart of the school's work. The school staff treat pupils with respect and courtesy and help them develop moral awareness. Whenever possible pupils are given the opportunity to take part in work placements and all pupils are able to research future career options. At present there are only limited opportunities in school for pupils to follow vocational courses.
- Parents and carers praise the way that the school boosts the confidence of pupils, the 'lovely atmosphere' and the safeguarding measures. All parents and carers are kept well informed about pupils' progress and behaviour.

Governance

- The proprietor and her business manager have a good understanding of the school and its effectiveness. They share the vision of the head of education and support her fully in improving the school. They hold leaders to account for the performance of pupils and systematically check pupils' personal and academic progress. The proprietor sets targets for all staff and ensures that the company has a coordinated approach to looking after pupils and achieving the best outcomes.
- Governors ensure that the school provides a warm, safe, welcoming environment. The school is well resourced. Governors are ambitious for further improvement. They receive weekly reports on all pupils and ask challenging questions when necessary. They maintain a strategic role and ensure that the school is financially stable.
- Governors ensure that the safeguarding policy fully meets current requirements and that all the required information is published on the school's website.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is an absolute priority for all staff. Leaders have put rigorous systems in place to ensure that pupils are safe. Safeguarding is seen as everyone's responsibility and all staff are highly trained. The head of education and the proprietor ensure that staff recruitment and child protection arrangements are excellent. The school has meticulous risk assessments for all activities, including off-site visits. Health and safety checks are frequent and comprehensive.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers plan learning around pupils' interests and try to use examples from real-life situations whenever possible. For example, in English pupils read leaflets published by charities to understand the techniques of writing persuasively. They studied video clips to see how the influence of famous people can also be used to advantage in promoting a particular charity or product. This blend of activities resulted in some high-quality work by pupils of all abilities. Teachers ensure that pupils use correct spelling and grammar and try to extend their vocabulary wherever possible.
- Problem-solving challenges in mathematics ensure that pupils are able to see the value of mathematical knowledge in practical situations. For example, in mathematics, pupils designed a suitable crate to transport a giraffe for a zoo, calculated the correct level of medication for the animal and found the shortest route between zoos.
- All pupils have an individual learning programme for each day. The timetable is flexible and allows for one-to-one tuition where necessary. Learning is carefully planned to take account of the information in pupils' statements of special educational needs or in their education, health and care plans. Pupils are motivated by the 'creative learning challenges' set by their teachers. These challenges cover all subjects and provide imaginative learning experiences that capture pupils' interest.
- Pupils often arrive at Elland House after a period out of education and some move back into mainstream school. Teachers use an appropriate award scheme so that even if the pupils are only in the school for a few months they can complete specific topics of learning and experience success. The school does not set homework routinely but responds to pupils' requests for homework when they are enjoying a particular topic.

- Systems for tracking pupils' progress have greatly improved since the previous inspection. Teachers carry out comprehensive testing soon after pupils arrive so that they have a clear base from which to measure progress accurately. They use diagnostic tests which highlight gaps in knowledge and understanding so that these can then be addressed. Pupils' progress is checked weekly, monthly, termly and yearly. As a result it is possible to see how well pupils have progressed and where they need extra support to fill in gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
- Most-able pupils are identified quickly so that teachers can set work appropriate to their abilities. Marking is helpful and provides pupils with a clear idea of their next steps.
- Pupils are well supported by a very effective teaching assistant who works closely with teaching staff.
- There are good relationships between school staff, pupils, parents and carers. The school has a home learning programme for any pupils who cannot attend school. Communications between school and parents and carers are good.
- Because pupils are carrying out different tasks and working at their own pace, sometimes there is a pause when some finish early and others do not. This can therefore slow progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The emotional well-being of pupils is a high priority for all staff. The good relationships between pupils and members of staff result in pupils receiving high-quality care and support.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe online and in risky situations. The many trips and visits that pupils make build up their self-confidence and their ability to manage their behaviour in the community.
- Instances of bullying are exceptionally rare. The school has very clear policies and procedures in the event of bullying so that pupils can recognise different forms of bullying, know that it is unacceptable and trust the adults to deal with it if necessary.
- Pupils are consulted about the school rules, which are adapted as necessary when cohorts of pupils change.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning can vary but persistent and imaginative staff ensure that their progress is good by using a variety of different techniques.
- Older pupils are provided with careers education guidance through the personal, social and health education programme. Pupils are well informed about future opportunities because leaders have a good understanding of what is available in local colleges. Wherever possible pupils are provided with work experience placements to help them in making decisions about their future options.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and around the school is generally good. The school environment is lively and vibrant and pupils respect the displays of work and examples of art and models on display.
- Occasional instances of poor behaviour are managed very effectively by staff. Pupils are well aware of the rewards and sanctions system and respond positively to it. The record

of incidents in school is kept meticulously and shows that there is a strong improvement in the behaviour of individuals over time.

- Attendance is below the national average and is very variable. Some pupils have excellent attendance records and some have low attendance which is often related to medical conditions. The school has effective measures to check daily on the whereabouts of any pupil who is not in school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Evidence from observing pupils' work in lessons and scrutiny of the written work in their folders shows that progress is good in a range of subjects and from individual starting points. This includes the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or education, health and care plans.
- Good progress is evident in pupils' work in English, where they develop stamina to write in full paragraphs and at length. Files of pupils' work also show strong progress in history, geography, science and art. Pupils read regularly and practise speaking and communication skills.
- Pupils of all ages complete units of work which are externally accredited. They are able to gain accreditation in a wide variety of topics as diverse as mathematical and science concepts, first aid, fire safety, data protection, enterprise skills and humanities topics. These units of work ensure that even when pupils are only in the school for short periods they have the opportunity to improve their skills and experience success.
- Pupils in key stage 4 are successful in gaining entry-level qualifications in English and mathematics and some go on to take GCSE examinations in these subjects as well as other subjects of their choice. The school's leaders recognise that the menu of vocational opportunities available to pupils is limited and they intend to take action to broaden this range.
- All pupils take part in weekly sporting activities of their choice including golf, swimming, cycling and horse riding. These activities take place off-site.
- Pupils identified as being the most able are set extended challenges involving research and problem solving. Some of these challenges set high expectations of pupils and result in good learning and progress. Occasionally pupils are set work which is too easy, and this slows the rate of learning because pupils lose interest.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training because of the opportunities to attend work placements and their competence in the core skills of literacy, numeracy and information technology.

School details

Unique reference number	131751
DfE registration number	353/6019
Inspection number	10012866

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	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Janet Lumb
Chair	Janet Lumb
Headteacher	Jan Edge
Annual fees (day pupils)	£32,000
Telephone number	0161 628 3600
Website	www.timeouthomes.co.uk
Email address	elland@timeouthomes.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 June 2013

Information about this school

- Elland House is a small independent special school that is registered to admit up to 20 boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16 years who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some pupils have mental health issues and associated learning difficulties. The school is part of the Timeout Company, which provides care in a number of children's homes in the north west of England. The company also owns and runs Riverbank Primary School.
- The school is currently located in a two-storey building on a small industrial estate situated in a residential area of Oldham.

- The number of pupils on roll fluctuates throughout the year. Some stay for a short period and others for much longer periods. Most pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan (EHC).
- Currently all six pupils on roll come from White British backgrounds.
- It is common for pupils to have been out of education for long periods prior to attending Elland House.
- The school does not use alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in several subjects including English, mathematics, information technology and history, and looked at pupils' work folders and assessments of their progress.
- The inspector held meetings with the head of education, other members of staff, and a senior manager representing the proprietor, as well as pupils.
- The inspector took account of the views of the three members of staff who returned inspection questionnaires.
- The inspector spoke to a parent in school and took account of the comments of three responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire.
- Policies and procedures were scrutinised to establish the school's compliance with the independent school standards, particularly those relating to safeguarding, the quality of teaching and learning, and matters relating to health and safety.

Inspection team

Judith Straw, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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