

Jefferson House

The Old Vicarage, Darnhall School Lane, Winsford CW7 1JT

Inspection dates

29 November – 1 December 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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This school leaves absolutely nothing to chance when it comes to safeguarding. Work to promote the personal development and welfare of pupils is outstanding.
- Strong leadership from the headteacher, director of education and proprietor has ensured that this is a good and improving school.
- The headteacher is exceptionally well organised. She has excellent relationships with staff and is committed to ensuring that pupils make good progress and enjoy their time at school.
- Teaching is good. Staff know pupils very well. They make learning interesting and challenge pupils to achieve to their very best. Sometimes opportunities are missed to probe pupils' understanding and deepen their knowledge.
- Teaching staff benefit from various training opportunities. Too few relate to the new qualification requirements for English and mathematics.
- Pupils benefit from a personalised curriculum which is tailored to capture their interests and meet their educational needs.
- Behaviour is good and attendance is high. Pupils rarely miss school and are punctual to lessons. They say that they always feel safe and listened to.
- All pupils, including those who have spent long periods out of education, make good progress in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science.
- Therapy forms a central part of pupils' time at the school. This helps pupils to develop appropriate ways to express their anxieties and concerns and deal with past experiences.
- Pupils have a good understanding of British values and a knowledge of political institutions.
- Senior leaders' work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Social workers from different local authorities are very complimentary about the work of the school and highly satisfied with pupils' progress.
- Parents describe the school as 'superb' and relationships with staff as 'fantastic'.
- The proprietor and senior leaders are highly effective in ensuring that the independent school standards are met.

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 the quality of leadership and management further by enhancing professional development opportunities for teaching staff to include training linked to the new qualification requirements for English and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across all subjects, by further developing the skills of teaching staff, so they become more effective at asking probing and challenging questions and deepening pupils' understanding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher is determined to ensure that pupils enjoy school and achieve to the very best of their abilities. Together with the director of education and the proprietor, she ensures that the independent school standards are met and that the school continues to improve.
- Most pupils, all boys, come to the school with deep-seated social and emotional problems; some have behavioural difficulties. However, pupils thrive because they are exceptionally well looked after and develop strong bonds and trusting relationships with staff. Such relationships help to create an excellent climate for learning that supports pupils' good progress.
- Senior leaders have developed comprehensive systems for assessing pupils' performance in a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics, sciences and citizenship. Pupils' progress is closely monitored in relation to their academic performance, attitudes to learning and engagement in activities in class. School records and work in pupils' books show that pupils make consistently good progress, including those who have been out of education for long periods.
- Weekly therapy for pupils is an integral part of the school's unique 'three-phase recovery model'. Having secured pupils' safety and participation in school activities, therapists are currently working with pupils to help them gain an insight and understanding of their previous experiences. Most pupils will soon be moving into the third phase of the model, which is linked to restoration and life-long learning. Inspection evidence indicates that this model is highly effective in helping these pupils to engage in learning and become good citizens.
- Pupils have a good appreciation of British values. They know their rights, but appreciate that they also have responsibilities. Pupils have an in-depth knowledge of political institutions and democratic processes. They learn songs, carols, sea shanties and understand the symbolism within the flags of the countries that make up the British Isles. Pupils also learn about the legend of St George and support Red Hand Day (the campaign against the recruitment of child soldiers). Pupils regularly raise money for various charities and understand the culturally diverse nature of British society.
- Work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is highly effective. Pupils have a good knowledge of world religions and celebrate various religious and cultural festivals, including Chinese New Year. Pupils learn about inspirational sports personalities and enjoy going to the pantomime. They learn to accept that they are responsible for the environment through their 'sustainable global education' studies.
- For such a small school, senior leaders do an excellent job in ensuring that pupils have access to a wide range of subjects. All pupils benefit from a curriculum tailored to their ability and interests. This includes online learning in a wide range of GCSE subjects, including geography, physics and history, and one-to-one support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils learn French and have access to music tuition.
- The headteacher and director of education monitor the quality of teaching regularly and

offer useful advice to staff on how they can improve their practice. Performance management procedures are stringent, clearly linking teachers' targets to pupils' outcomes.

- Teachers and teaching assistants are trained well. Some benefit from the knowledge and expertise of staff within the various schools in the Care for Children group. For example, the member of staff responsible for science meets with, and learns from, the expertise of the science specialist in the group of schools. The sharing of expertise in English and mathematics is not as good. For example, not all teaching staff are fully conversant with the new qualification requirements for English and mathematics.

Governance

- Directors of the company, including the director of education and the chief executive officer, along with the proprietor, have a full understanding of how the school operates. The director of education teaches French weekly, knows pupils well and has a thorough understanding of the school's strengths. The proprietor visits the school regularly and is known by staff and pupils.
- Frequent meetings, including senior leaders, therapists and 'house' staff, provide opportunities for strategic discussions relating to, among other things, improving pupils' attainment and ensuring the continual improvement of the quality of teaching.
- Directors are highly ambitious for the school, teachers and pupils. They have created, and ensure the maintenance of, a stimulating and a well-resourced learning environment and have helped to nurture both tolerance and respect among staff and pupils. Quite rightly, directors are proud of the excellent work carried out by the headteacher and the distance that the school has travelled in its short history.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils' safety is given the highest possible priority. The school carries out detailed risk assessments on each pupil, using a risk assessment screening tool, and assesses all possible risks to pupils when they are out in the community or on educational trips.
- All staff are familiar with the latest government guidance from the Department for Education on keeping children safe in education. They are exceptionally well equipped in protecting pupils against extremism, radicalisation and online grooming.
- Staff know precisely what to do if a pupil is at risk, or breaches any of the school's safety rules or procedures.
- Health and safety checks are regular and comprehensive. Senior leaders ensure that the safeguarding policy meets current requirements and that the required information is made available to parents and placing authorities.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The school's main teacher, the headteacher, works exceptionally well with the full-time teaching assistant, and other teaching staff, to make learning interesting and enjoyable. All learning is planned around pupils' interests and linked to their individual learning programmes.

- Accurate assessment information provides staff with a precise knowledge of pupils' skills and abilities. This ensures that the most able and those who need extra help are appropriately supported. The former have extra work in class and challenging homework, the latter have targeted support from skilled teaching assistants.
- Teaching staff have excellent relationships with pupils, characterised by trust and mutual respect. Such positive and productive relationships help staff to motivate and challenge pupils. This enhances pupils' studiousness and inspires them to have a go and try their best.
- Pupils learn in one main classroom. Here they can access computers and a wide range of factual books and novels. Pupils' work is celebrated and displayed alongside information on International Peace Day, music studies, the history of well-known peace advocates and world faiths. The classroom mirrors the school's culture of high expectations, hooking pupils into learning and firing their imagination.
- Problem-solving in mathematics helps to develop pupils' appreciation of the importance of mathematics in everyday life. This was shown in a lesson where pupils were learning about angles. Pupils were asked to think about how architects and airline pilots use angles in their work. They were then asked to guess the angles taken by a driver manoeuvring a car to make a three-point turn. After exploring the angles of different objects in the classroom, pupils soon got to grips with the idea that angles are everywhere.
- Staff make learning fun. This was exemplified in an English class where pupils were learning to extend their language to improve their writing. After being blindfolded, each pupil tasted different foods, including onions, crisps, biscuits and fruit. They were then asked to describe the taste of the foods. This generated great excitement as pupils realised that obscuring one sense, sight, masked others, particularly taste. Pupils could hardly contain themselves when a classmate could not distinguish between the taste of an apple, a pear or a banana.
- Pupils' individual learning programmes ensure their good progress over time because activities are set at the correct level of challenge. During most lessons, pupils are engaged in different learning activities. For example, the most able can direct their own online learning in physics, chemistry and other subjects, while others are preparing music compositions or participating in the main lesson. Pupils who need extra help often receive one-to-one support. However, they are encouraged to participate in discussions whenever possible.
- Work in pupils' books shows that they make good progress over time in English, mathematics, biology, citizenship and a wide range of other subjects. All staff adhere to the school's feedback and assessment policy, ensuring that all pupils' work is marked and up to date; this consistent practice enhances pupils' understanding. In addition, pupils' take heed of teachers' good advice and improve their work as a result.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their learning. They have various target cards in their books and folders against which they regularly assess their own performance.
- Whether pupils are participating in lively debate around democracy and British political institutions, learning about 'the incredible pump' in biology or finding out about Britain's cultural links with America through food, history and the creative arts, they are almost

always engaged in learning. On the few occasions when teaching is not as effective as it should be, questions do not fully challenge pupils' thinking or deepen their understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are exceptionally confident and have a very well developed understanding of what it takes to become a successful learner. This is because teaching staff clearly communicate their expectations of pupils and regularly monitor pupils' attitudes to learning.
- The emotional well-being of pupils is given the highest of priorities. This is gauged and nurtured through pupils' weekly therapeutic sessions and the personal, social, emotional and health aspects of the curriculum.
- The school's outstanding therapeutic work gives pupils a deep and meaningful insight into their past experiences. This helps pupils to manage their behaviour at school well, form productive relationships with staff and peers and develop a positive view of their own prospects.
- The frequent positive feedback that pupils get from staff on their work and behaviour boosts pupils' self-esteem. It also encourages them to persevere with challenging tasks, both in the classroom and during sporting activities such as squash, badminton, table tennis and athletics.
- Most pupils are highly articulate and listen to each other respectfully. They are encouraged to discuss topical issues and voice their opinions, as they did during the inspection when considering the question, 'Who rules Britain?'
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the dangers of illegal substances, including drugs, and of the risks associated with smoking and drinking alcohol. They learn about healthy relationships, food and nutrition and how to keep mind and body functioning well.
- Pupils have an exceptionally high level of awareness of the potential dangers and pitfalls of internet use and mobile forms of communication. Their access to the internet is strictly limited and closely monitored.
- Pupils say that they always feel safe. They know that they can talk in full confidence to any member of staff and that they will always be listened to.
- Pupils receive good information about careers, education and training opportunities through various aspects of the curriculum, including citizenship studies. Because of the nature of pupils' emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and the stage of pupils' development in relation to the school's therapeutic programme, there are limitations regarding pupils' participation in the community. However, senior leaders are currently working with local careers services and an international banking firm in order to create work-based learning opportunities and to provide comprehensive independent careers advice.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is good and they are punctual to lessons. Pupils regularly participate in a range of extra-curricular activities, including chess, music and homework club. They are polite, enjoy welcoming visitors into the school and are very eager to talk about their learning.
- Pupils move around the school sensibly and safely and enjoy the camaraderie and teamwork that their regular lunchtime football games afford. They look forward to their weekly sporting activities at a local leisure centre and understand the link between regular exercise and fitness.
- Pupils' behaviour in class is good. When pupils get overexcited, they sometimes shout out. However, this is usually checked without curbing pupils' enthusiasm. On occasions when pupils find it difficult to participate appropriately in class, they are immediately identified by staff and supported. This usually builds pupils' confidence, enabling them to come back into class and continue with their learning.
- Parents, staff and social workers from placing authorities are overwhelmingly positive about pupils' behaviour, which they say is good. Pupils say that behaviour is good because 'we have the right mindset' and because 'teachers expect good things of us'. Inspection evidence, including a full scrutiny of the school's behaviour logs, reveals that behaviour is typically good over time.
- Pupils have a precise understanding of racism, which they say is not tolerated in school. Pupils also understand various forms of prejudice-based bullying. For example, they say that if anyone gets angry and uses homophobic language, it is always challenged.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school's well-organised and comprehensive baseline information helps senior leaders to accurately assess pupils' skills and abilities in reading, writing and mathematics when they enter the school. This information provides teaching staff with a secure starting point from which to measure pupils' progress.
- Pupils enter the school with different skills and abilities. Some have weak skills in all areas of learning, especially those who have missed long periods of education. There are wide variations in pupils' abilities in subjects such as reading. However, inspection evidence, including work in pupils' books and folders and the school's own assessment and progress information, shows that pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects from their different starting points.
- The most able pupils are exceptionally well supported, with tailored online learning programmes in a broad range of GCSEs, including history, geography, chemistry and mathematics. Such pupils also receive one-to-one tuition in English literature and are highly articulate and motivated well to work independently and take responsibility for their own learning.
- From exceptionally low starting points in some instances, pupils' progress in reading is good. Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure and soon develop an appreciation of books written in different styles. For example, pupils, some of whom had been reluctant readers, were proud to say that they had read most of Suzanne Collins' 'Hunger games' books, and that they enjoyed John Steinbeck's 'Of mice and men'.
- All pupils have access to computers and laptops in their well-resourced classroom. They

demonstrate good skills in navigating through various word-processing, music and desktop-publishing programmes. Individual tuition is available for those pupils wishing to study computing or graphic design. Inspection evidence indicates that they make rapid progress in these subjects.

- Pupils' folders show many examples of extended writing in English, citizenship studies and science. Pupils make good progress in writing because teaching staff help them to improve their spelling, grammar and punctuation. Pupils take pride in their work and have many opportunities to write for different purposes. This includes accounts of their recent volunteer work in an animal rescue centre, letter-writing and discursive arguments on topics relating to human rights.
- The headteacher ensures that 'there is something for everyone' in relation to qualifications. To this end, ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) and AQA (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance), qualifications in areas such as animal care, hospitality and citizenship are available. In addition, pupils' folders show good progress made in expressive arts, food technology and computing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities enjoy learning. They fully engage in lessons and make good progress because they benefit from well-trained, empathetic teachers who have high expectations of them.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and appreciate the relevance and importance of this subject, as expressed in the work in their books and through discussions with the inspector. Several pupils are studying for their mathematics GCSE qualification and are making rapid progress in this subject.

School details

Unique reference number	142332
DfE registration number	896/6002
Inspection number	10012942

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 for boys with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	5
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor/Chief executive officer	Kamron Abassi
Chair/Director of education	Tariq Verpalen
Headteacher	Kendra Morgan
Annual fees (day pupils)	£24,000
Telephone number	01606 554153
Email address	tariq.verpalen@care4children.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Jefferson House is an independent school operated and owned by Care for Children. The school opened in September 2015 and has not been previously inspected. Jefferson House is one of five schools in the Care for Children group, based in different parts of the country.
- The school has one full-time teacher and teaching assistant. All other staff, including those who provide one-to-one specialist teaching and pupil support, are part-time. The director of education teaches French.
- The school aims to 'offer unconditional positive regard to all young people, irrespective of their background' and to 'achieve demonstrable and measurable positive outcomes by putting the young people at the centre of everything we do'.

- The school caters for five boys, who all have social and emotional difficulties and some have behavioural difficulties. All pupils are in the care of various local placing authorities.
- Most pupils have attended the school for approximately a year. The school offers a two-year education and therapeutic programme. All pupils are part way through this programme.
- Some pupils have either a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Residential accommodation for pupils is provided on-site.
- The school does not have a website. However, all necessary documentation, including safeguarding and complaints policies and procedures and admissions criteria, are made available to parents and placing authorities.
- The school does not use alternative provision. Almost all pupils are aged 16 or under. The school does not currently offer work experience or college placements. Each pupil's curriculum is tailored to meet their specific needs and is linked to their progress in relation to the school's therapeutic programme.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed all pupils in various lessons, including English, mathematics and science. Pupils' work was scrutinised during lessons and separately.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, teaching assistant, school therapist and other members of staff.
- The inspector held a meeting with the director of education. A telephone conversation took place with the proprietor.
- The inspector met formally with all pupils and had informal discussions with them throughout the course of the inspection. The school's own survey of pupils' views were considered.
- Questionnaires submitted by three members of staff were scrutinised. Responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) were considered, as were telephone discussions with parents. Telephone discussions also took place with social workers from three placing authorities.
- The inspector examined a range of documentary evidence. This included the school's records and checks on the suitability of staff to work with children. In addition, the inspector scrutinised the school's reviews of its own performance, development plans, checks on the quality of teaching, safeguarding documentation, including risk assessments, and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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