

Walton Hall Academy

Stafford Road, Eccleshall, Stafford, Staffordshire ST21 6JR

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2017

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
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision	Outstanding
Quality of care and support in the residential provision	Outstanding
How well children and young people are protected in the residential provision	Outstanding
Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers in the residential provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors, supported by skilled trust members, have worked with pace and determination to improve all aspects of the school since it became an academy. Their desire to make sure pupils achieve the best outcomes is at the heart of their practice.
- Most pupils are making good progress in all areas of their learning and personal development. By the time they leave the academy, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education and development.
- Leaders use additional government funding for pupils well.
- Leaders' regular and purposeful checking of the quality of teaching and learning has helped to ensure that teaching is effective and pupils usually achieve well.
- Leaders follow up pupils' absence quickly and check that pupils who are not attending school are safe. However, attendance is below the national average and this means that some pupils are not achieving as well as they could be.
- Pupils behave well in class and around the school. All staff work effectively together to make sure that pupils who need extra help to manage their behaviour receive this in a consistent way.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and independence. Leaders make the most of the school's unique environment to provide additional vocational qualifications for pupils in key stage 4 and post-16 provision. This helps to improve further, pupils' skills for life and chances to gain employment.

- Leaders track the progress each pupil makes in different subjects but they do not always use this information to look at how well different groups are performing across the school. They are not able to demonstrate the small steps of progress pupils with complex needs make.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils take part enthusiastically in high-quality enrichment opportunities.
- Pupils feel safe at this school. Leaders have made sure that their strong systems for keeping children safe are understood and put into practice by all staff. Leaders of the school and the residential provision do not yet make best use of what they learn from individual incidents to improve their future practice.
- The residential provision provides an outstanding experience for pupils and a high level of care and protection. It enables them to make outstanding progress.
- Higher-ability pupils are not always challenged sufficiently to make sure that they make even better progress.

Compliance with national minimum standards for residential special schools

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for residential special schools and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that:
 - all groups of pupils, particularly the higher-ability pupils and pupils with complex needs, are challenged to make rapid progress
 - assessment systems used by the school are refined so that they can accurately monitor the progress of all groups and measure the small steps of progress for pupils with complex needs.
- Work with parents and carers to improve the attendance of pupils who continue to be persistently absent from school so that these pupils can make better progress.
- Further develop the collaboration between residential and school provision to bring about the best outcomes for all pupils.
- Review safeguarding case studies and live school cases to look at the quality of practice, recording and outcomes for children to improve further already strong practice which exists in the school and residential provision.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers in the residential provision	Outstanding
How well children and young people are protected in the residential provision	Outstanding

- The principal, well supported by senior leaders and the trust, has made significant improvements to the school since it became an academy. The principal has motivated the staff to make the school a positive place for learning. Leaders have accurately identified the school's strengths and weaknesses and use this information to drive improvements in all areas. Leaders are not afraid to make difficult decisions in the best interests of the pupils.
- Residential managers are enthusiastic about and committed to the provision. They have high expectations of pupils and the residential staff team. As a team, they strive for continual improvement. The pupil-centred approach provides staff with a clear focus and enables pupils to make significant social and emotional progress.
- Recent appointments of subject leaders in the school are strengthening the capacity to drive further improvements. For example, the strong leadership and teaching of science is being used as a model to support other members of staff to improve their practice.
- Leaders know the pupils very well and talk passionately and in great detail about the progress they make at Walton Hall. Leaders use additional funding creatively, including pupil premium funding and the Year 7 catch-up premium, when planning interventions for pupils. For instance, leaders used information from a well-being survey carried out with pupils to plan activities which would reduce pupils' anxieties about sitting examinations.
- Leaders' monitoring systems are thorough; they carry out weekly learning walks, regular lesson observations and scrutinies of pupils' work. These well-documented processes are used alongside progress information to offer additional support where it is needed and identify areas for improvement. Leaders draw on the skills of governors to help them with their monitoring and this means that leaders and governors have a shared understanding of strengths and areas for improvement.
- All staff are supported through effective performance management. Leaders make sure that targets link to the school's areas for improvement and identify areas for support and training. For example, newly appointed middle leaders are benefiting from training provided by the trust.
- Professional development and training for all staff is well planned and coordinated and staff are able to access high-quality training through the Shaw Academy Trust. Staff are also encouraged to collaborate with other schools in the academy trust. Staff talk positively about the wide-ranging opportunities they have to develop professionally, as well as the direct support they receive from leaders to help them improve their practice. They say they have benefited from recent training in autism and mental

health. Increasingly, they reflect on their practice and this has helped them to improve the way that they support the pupils.

- Staff from the residential provision participate in core training and specialist training as well as in whole-school training. This enhances their knowledge and ensures that they have the necessary skills to effectively support children in the residential provision.
- Residential managers provide excellent day-to-day support and ensure that sufficient staff are available to meet pupils' needs in the residential provision. Staff receive regular formal and informal supervision and each member has personal development targets. Managers promote the professional development of the team and ensure excellent standards of practice.
- There is a broad curriculum that offers pupils a range of opportunities to develop their academic and social skills in every key stage. Curriculum options at key stages 4 and 5 allow pupils to develop wider vocational skills and achieve a range of different accreditations, from entry level to level 2 qualifications. Some pupils attend off-site courses such as vehicle mechanics and information technology at Stafford College. Pupils achieve accreditation in these subjects and those who choose to progress to college use these learned skills to further improve their outcomes.
- Pupils from every key stage are able to take part in many exciting enrichment opportunities. Every year, a group of pupils have the opportunity to take part in a residential activity. This may include spending a week on a tall ship, where pupils learn how to sail, cook and clean for themselves and experience being away from home, while working together and supporting one another. Within school, there are chances to take part in several lunchtime clubs and activities such as arts club, library club and basketball club.
- Leaders make sure that fundamental British values are promoted throughout the school and pupils have a good understanding about what this means. When talking about tolerance, one pupil said, 'It's OK to be different.' The understanding of different values is promoted through the school's curriculum and pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. Pupils with complex difficulties are taught how to make choices for themselves; others are helped to think about the consequences of their actions on others.
- Leaders and governors make sure that pupil premium funding is used appropriately to provide additional support for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, there are no significant gaps in the achievement between these pupils and their peers. Year 7 catch-up funding is used well to make sure that pupils are making expected progress in literacy and mathematics.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about Walton Hall and the 'caring and approachable' staff. Leaders have worked hard to improve relationships, both with parents and the wider community, and this is having a positive impact on the school's work. Parents receive termly updates about the progress their child is making. One parent echoed the views of other parents when she said, 'This school has changed our son's life for the better. He is, for the first time in his school life, happy at school. He feels safe and is accepted for who he is.'
- Attendance at Walton Hall is below the national average but leaders follow up any absences with rigour. They contact families on the first day and carry out home visits if

they have concerns. For some pupils, whose attendance is very low, leaders carry out regular checks to make sure they are safe and well. However, there is still work to be done to improve the attendance of some pupils who are persistently absent for no apparent reason.

Governance of the school

- The Shaw Academy Trust has ensured that there is a strong model of governance at Walton Hall. The school's governing body, known as the academy council, is able to use its wide-ranging expertise to challenge and support school leaders. Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and they know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are a relatively new to the role but have a clear vision for their development and are fulfilling their statutory duties and responsibilities.
- Governors and leaders have an excellent insight into how well pupils are progressing, being looked after and supported in the residential provision. Robust monitoring is evaluative and reflective of the views and opinions of pupils and parents. Governors and a number of independent visitors continue to report on the suitability of the service and the impact this has on pupils. The head of care is well supported in her role and fully understands the aims, objectives and purpose of the residential provision. The whole staff team are involved and responsible for the development of the residential service and clear targets are set in the residential development plan. Capacity for continued improvement is clearly demonstrated.
- The chair of the governing body leads by example and her strong commitment and determination for the school to improve is palpable. She, along with other governors, will not shy away from challenge and holds leaders to account. Governors take their safeguarding duties seriously. The chair of governors monitors safeguarding meetings on a monthly basis at the school so that governors can make sure that practice is effective. Governors have recognised that the way the school measures the progress of different pupil groups needs to improve and they monitor the progress of the school's improvement plans.
- Governors make sure that all aspects of performance management are effective. They participate appropriately in the performance management of the headteacher.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders actively promote all aspects of safeguarding and they will 'go the extra mile' to do all they can to reduce the risk of harm to a child. Training is comprehensive and up to date. Staff in both the school and the residential provision know what to do if they have a concern about a child. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is well supported by her deputies and this means that any concerns are followed up swiftly. Leaders hold weekly meetings, which are attended by the school nurse, to discuss any concerns and the impact of actions taken to keep pupils safe from harm.
- Safeguarding and child protection records are stored securely and centrally and show a detailed chronology of actions taken. There are clear, consistent procedures to follow

which are understood by all staff. Referrals are made to outside agencies when appropriate.

- Procedures to recruit, select and vet staff are effective, which means that pupils are being supported by suitable adults. The school's single central record is robustly managed and checked twice a term by governors.
- Staff receive training which is regularly updated in other areas of safeguarding, including recognising signs of child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation (FGM) and preventing radicalisation and extremism. They know that pupils are particularly vulnerable to exploitation via social media, 'sexting' for example. Their strong relationships with pupils enable them to talk about this openly and honestly.
- Leaders have utilised the trust's employment engagement officer creatively to reduce the risks of pupils who may be at risk of becoming 'NEET' (Not in Education, Employment or Training).
- New members of staff and volunteers receive high-quality safeguarding training on their induction.
- The academy site, despite its nature, is secure. Pupils are kept safe while they are on site and visitors to the school are managed well, through secure entrances and exits. Routines at the beginning and end of the day are smooth and safely managed and the pupils behave sensibly when getting on and off their transport. Parents are kept suitably informed about safety matters.
- Leaders in both the outstanding residential provision and the school do not yet work together to review the way in which they have handled child protection and safeguarding cases. This is an aspect which could be improved in order to strengthen further the effective safeguarding work which already takes place.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The reorganisation of the provision at each key stage has led to more targeted support for pupils who have different abilities. Some pupils have had their curriculum personalised even more than others, which is enabling them to access the curriculum more effectively than they have in the past.
- The teaching of science is a strength and the teaching of English and mathematics is continually improving. The appointment of subject leaders is having a positive impact on the level of challenge and pupils' access to specialist teaching. GCSE mathematics has now been introduced for the most able pupils and there are plans to introduce GCSE English and science.
- Where teaching is most effective in promoting good progress, staff make sure that the work is suited to the different abilities of the pupils within the group and pupils are given clear guidance about what they have to do. Staff make sure that the questions they ask help the pupils to deepen their learning. Pupils talk about how they enjoy their learning and they are keen to find out more.
- Teachers make sure that literacy is developed in different subjects which helps pupils to move on to harder work. Inspectors saw pupils who were confident to read out loud

in front of their peers. For example, a pupil was observed reading lyrics for a song while others were practising their dance for their performing arts qualification.

- Pupils are supported to learn, often with practical equipment, in ways which help them to develop their understanding, particularly in mathematics. Less-able pupils are helped to develop their communication and interaction skills and are supported with the use of signing and visual symbols.
- Staff make sure that activities develop pupils' skills. They enable them to practise and use these in different areas so that they will be able to live and work as independently as possible in the future. Pupils learn how to cook a meal from scratch, buying and using fresh ingredients, and they also know how to use equipment appropriately. Pupils talked with confidence about the rules for health and safety in the kitchen environment.
- Where pupils are at risk of falling behind with their work, staff help them by using a range of interventions to improve their skills and help them to catch up. One pupil spoke very openly about how he had struggled with his writing because of his dyslexia. The extra support he had received from staff had made his writing much better and helped him to improve his work in other subjects.
- Pupils are developing a resilience for learning. For example, inspectors saw one pupil who was learning about motorcycle safety having difficulties starting his bike. He persevered until it started and other pupils waited patiently for him. In another instance, pupils were assessing each other's work and the staff managed this sensitively. This meant that the pupils were able to accept the comments as helpful ways of improving their work, and it encouraged them to be evaluative.
- In some cases, because planning does not clearly identify what pupils can do prior to the lesson, or what they are expected to learn, activities are not always at the right level for pupils. As a result, they lose interest. Teachers do not always check the progress of some pupils during lessons and misconceptions about their learning can happen.
- Staff do not use a full range of effective ways to support the development of pupils' emerging communication skills. Sometimes, when working with the least able pupils, staff use too much spoken language, or ask questions that are too complex for pupils.
- Pupils are now presenting their written work well, as a result of the drive by leaders to improve this area. Work in books shows progress over time but, in some subjects, higher-ability pupils are not yet challenged enough to help them make even better progress.
- Leaders recognise that their assessment systems do not enable them to measure the small steps of progress which children with complex needs make and are taking action to address this.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- The calm and orderly routine and atmosphere as pupils arrive to school on buses and taxis continues throughout the day, into and beyond lunchtime.
- All the staff know the pupils very well and strong, appropriate relationships are clear to see. Pupils talk about how they enjoy coming to school and they are proud to be pupils of Walton Hall. Developing pupils' skills to help them become independent learners underpins the work of the school and pupils say that they enjoy learning to take on new responsibilities.
- Leaders have made sure that pupils have lots of opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe and activities are practically based and age-appropriate. For instance, pupils learn how to check that the motorcycles and quad bikes they ride are safe. They are taught how to withdraw money from a cashpoint machine without putting themselves at risk. Pupils understand the dangers of using the internet and know what 'grooming' means, and the steps they can take to protect themselves. Staff regularly remind pupils how to keep themselves safe, both through lessons and whole-school internet safety days.
- Pupils continue their learning about how to keep safe when they are in the residential provision. For example, with support from the local fire officer, new pupils to the unit had to practise regular fire drills. They were not allowed to stay overnight until they were able to show that they knew what to do if there was a fire.
- Some pupils have the opportunity to learn to travel independently and they are able to practise these skills regularly. Pupils in the residential provision have additional opportunities to use their travel training to access activities out of school. Staff provide supervision at a level suited to the individual pupil. Some pupils who now attend college are able to use public transport independently to travel to and from their destinations.
- Pupils are well supported with their emotional health and well-being and they are able to access a 'drop-in' counselling centre every lunchtime if they need extra help, or want to talk. Pupils who have experienced difficulties in the past are used as peer mentors to support the transition of new pupils into school, because they understand what they are experiencing.
- Leaders make sure that the transition of new pupils to the school is carefully managed, and liaise closely with feeder schools to make sure that pupils are well prepared. Staff know that certain times of the school day, such as breaks and lunchtime, cause more anxiety for new pupils so they make sure that new pupils have extra support during their 'taster' sessions. Parents of new pupils are encouraged to take part in the transition process, through coffee mornings and visits, for example. There are robust systems in place to support pupils who are moving on from Walton Hall, including visits to local providers and taster sessions.
- Pupils are provided with independent advice and guidance about their future options and this work is supported by the trust's employment engagement officer. Parents are given additional help and information to make the transition process run smoothly.
- Pupils are encouraged to look after their physical health and have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of activities such as swimming, karate and football. They learn about healthy eating and are able to plan healthy meals in their food technology

lessons. Inspectors saw pupils enjoying the opportunity to try new foods at lunchtime during 'Jamaica Day'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff, parents and pupils talk positively about standards of behaviour in the school. Inspectors did not see any disruption to learning. The behaviour support officer has taken effective action to make sure that there is a consistent approach to the management of behaviour in the school. As a result, the number of incidents has reduced. Fixed-term exclusions have also reduced over time. Where physical interventions are used, they are well planned and only used for the shortest amount of time. The number of times physical intervention is used is also reducing on a termly basis.
- Residential staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of pupils' needs in all areas of their development. They use this knowledge to promote positive outcomes through verbal praise and tangible rewards. This approach replaces the need for sanctions or physical restraint and helps pupils manage their anxieties. The continual celebration of pupils' achievements promotes their self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Pupils say there is little bullying in school, and when it happens, staff deal with it quickly. This view is shared by staff and the majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. Some pupils act as anti-bullying ambassadors for the school. The few incidents of unkindness which take place are recorded and followed up by staff.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision at local schools in the trust and at Stafford College are kept safe and are making good progress. Their personal development is promoted in the same way as it is at school and, currently, they are all on track to achieve their predicted outcomes.
- Attendance at Walton Hall remains below the national average, and is lower for disadvantaged pupils than for their peers. Leaders know that attendance needs to improve and have taken steps to address this, especially for those pupils who are persistently absent. However, they are not yet seeing the impact of this work.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The majority of pupils are making good progress overall and there are no significant gaps in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and their peers. In some areas of the curriculum, disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than the non-disadvantaged pupils. Outcomes are good for pupils in year 11 and post-16. However, higher-ability pupils are not always challenged sufficiently to achieve the best outcomes.
- Pupils are able to achieve a wide range of accreditation that demonstrates progress from their starting points. This includes vocational courses, from entry level to level 2, and functional skills qualifications which help pupils to prepare for work or college.

Some pupils achieve level 2 qualifications, the equivalent to GCSE A* to C by the time they leave post-16 provision.

- There is some variation in performance between groups of pupils in different subjects. For example, pupils do better in English compared to mathematics by the end of key stage 4 but the opposite is the case in the post-16 phase. Progress in science is stronger than in English or mathematics. Leaders are aware of these differences and are taking steps to address them.
- While pupils are able to achieve a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics, they have previously not been able to take any GCSE examinations in these subjects. This has had an impact on them if they go to college, as they are expected to take the GCSE qualification, even if they have already achieved an equivalent qualification. As a result of this, leaders have begun to introduce GCSE courses for the pupils to follow.
- Leaders recognise that a legacy of poor assessment information has had an effect on how accurately they have been able to measure the progress of some groups of pupils. This is especially the case for pupils with complex difficulties. While leaders recognise the need to improve assessment processes, they have used other ways of assessing pupils' abilities in the interim. Consequently, they have made sure that pupils are on track to achieve their targets.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The 16 to 19 provision is good. It is well led and managed and safeguarding is effective. Teaching, learning and assessment are good and this leads to good outcomes for the pupils.
- Work-related learning and work experience is a strength of this post-16 provision, as are performing arts and music. Pupils make good progress in the wide range of vocational subjects offered. They value these courses and are able to recognise why they are important. One pupil learning about how to ride a motorcycle safely said, 'We learn how to use them on the main roads. It helps us be ready for when we leave school.'
- Outcomes in mathematics are stronger than those in English, and writing is the weakest area. Pupils cannot currently take GCSE examinations but leaders are making changes to enable pupils to do this in the future.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop their independence and they enjoy opportunities to do this in activities such as travel training and cooking, or being a house captain or anti-bullying ambassador. Pupils run a café in school every week and this helps them to develop business and enterprise skills.
- Pupils behave well and are engaged in their learning. There are strong relationships between staff and pupils, and pupils value the support they receive from adults in the school. Pupils are supported well in all areas of personal and social development and they learn about sex and relationships education in an appropriate way. They understand how to keep themselves safe, especially when using the internet and they are able to talk about other ways to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils who begin studying in post-16 provision usually stay for the length of the course and all pupils who left school recently went on to further education, training or

employment. Pupils are given good advice and guidance about their future careers, both from school staff and from an independent employment engagement officer in the trust.

- Attendance in post-16 programmes remains below the national average and some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. This is affecting the progress that this group of pupils is making.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision

Outstanding

- Pupils make outstanding progress in the residential provision taking account of their starting points. They experience nurturing and tailored care that reflects their individual needs and vulnerabilities. Staff are extremely well organised and pupils have integrated, comprehensive care plans. Parents and carers recognise and commend the immensely positive impact this service has on the development of their pupils' social, emotional and practical skills. One parent commented, 'My child is developing her independence and personal care skills through this very valuable provision. As a result of her achievements, her confidence and self-esteem is also improving greatly.'
- Stimulating activities are central to pupils' time in the residential provision. They are interesting, rewarding and motivational. All pupils, regardless of their individual support needs or communication needs, are enabled to participate fully in all activities. Staff engage with them from the moment their school day ends, using fun and entertaining activities to continue the learning process and support them to develop new skills. This continual learning culture forms an essential aspect of the residential provision.
- Pupils, staff and parents work together to set personal goals and targets that are suitably stimulating and challenging. This supports each pupil to achieve their full potential and overcome any barriers or difficulties they may face. This outstanding practice means that pupils' progress continues to be measurable and sustained.
- Pupils enjoy their time in the residential provision and look forward to spending quality time with their friends and peers. These relationships consistently support and assist their interpersonal social skills and emotional development. Positive relationships between pupils and staff are also a considerable strength of the residential provision. The atmosphere in residence is relaxed, warm and welcoming and pupils thrive in the setting because they have fun and receive bespoke care that enhances their life chances.

Quality of care and support in the residential provision

Outstanding

- The residential staff team are long-standing, experienced and professional. Their continuing professional development both as a team, and as individuals, enhances the quality of practice and outcomes for pupils across the whole school. They work together in their shared desire for continued improvement. They use social care research and published information to support ongoing improvements to the service.
- Pupils consistently receive outstanding care and support that is tailored to reflect their individual needs and circumstances. One parent described the staff as 'always ready to

listen to concerns and act immediately'. Staff receive comprehensive and clear direction and support from a strong and effective management team. The team sets a high standard for day-to-day routines and activities in the residential provision. As a result, pupils thrive in this environment.

- Admission and induction practices are extremely well planned and organised. Pupils and their families are aware of the residential service offered by the school before they are eligible to access the provision. Residential staff understand the anxieties experienced by pupils and their families when they first use this service. They work in partnership to emphasise the positive impact the service has on pupils' development. The residential provision continues until pupils prepare to leave the school and it enhances pupils' future life, independence, educational and career opportunities.
- Staff promote the active involvement of pupils in decision-making processes which affect how the residential service is run and developed. Their views are proactively sought, both as individuals and as a group. Pupils know how to make suggestions, raise concerns and how to make a formal complaint. Pupils have direct access to both the head of care and an independent listener, and they receive regular visits from independent visitors. These arrangements give pupils a range of trusted adults with whom they can discuss ideas and raise any concerns.

School details

Unique reference number	140997
Social care unique reference number	SC038723
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10032551

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	134
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	40
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Julie Stevenson
Principal	Pauline Carmichael
Telephone number	01785 850420
Website	waltonhall.set-mat.co.uk
Email address	pcarmichael@waltonhall.shaw-education.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Walton Hall is a special school for secondary aged and post-16 pupils who have moderate, severe or complex learning difficulties and autism. It is part of the Shaw Education Trust, a multi-academy trust which includes Blackfriars and Coppice special academies and five other schools in and beyond Staffordshire. Walton Hall provides short-term residential provision for 60 pupils during term time.

- The school became an academy in 2014. When the predecessor school was inspected in June 2014, it was judged to require improvement.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are below the national average.
- The majority of pupils are transported to and from school by minibus.
- The school is located in a rural part of Staffordshire and the site is organised into three separate departments. Pupils in post-16 provision are based in the 19th-century country house, which is a grade 2 listed building.
- Pupils in key stages 4 and 5 attend Blackfriars School, Coppice School and Stafford College for some of their course options.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- This was an integrated inspection; an inspection of the residential provision took place at the same time as the school inspection and the findings are included in this report.
- Inspectors visited parts of lessons across the site, accompanied by senior leaders. They looked at pupils' work and talked to pupils about their learning. They looked at the school's assessment information.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders, governors, staff, parents and pupils. They looked at a wide range of evidence related to safeguarding, including the processes for checking and appointing staff, staff training in safeguarding, the management of child protection cases, and records of behaviour, safety and physical interventions.
- The social care regulatory inspector spent time in the residential provision, talking to staff and pupils and observing pupils during activities.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and looked at examples of work in their books. They talked to them formally and informally and also considered the 46 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors held meetings with the acting principal, acting vice-principal, other leaders and members of staff.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the academy trust, the chair of the governing body and other governors. The lead inspector spoke to the principal via telephone.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through talking to parents on site, 14 responses on Parent View, Ofsted's parent questionnaire and a very small number of letters.
- A wide range of school documentation was scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation, its improvement plan, assessment and progress information, attendance records, minutes of meetings of the governing body, information about managing teachers' performance and staff training records.

Inspection team

Deb Jenkins, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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