

The Haven School

Wolverhampton Road, Stafford, Staffordshire ST17 9DJ

Inspection dates

23–24 May 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
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have a clear understanding of the individual learning needs of all pupils and, as a result, the curriculum is broad and balanced and well matched to the abilities and interests of all pupils.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school. High levels of supervision and strong, trusting relationships ensure that pupils thrive in a nurturing learning environment.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are highly positive. Teachers take time to get to know pupils and, as a result, pupils flourish in a happy, caring environment.
- The arrangements for governance and lines of accountability are not sufficiently well refined to ensure fully effective school improvement. Arrangements for monitoring teachers' performance are not yet fully embedded.
- Leaders do not always use the range of information they hold on pupils to full effect to bring about further improvements in learning.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is highly effective. Baseline tests inform detailed learning passports and pupil integration plans based on education, health and care plan outcomes.
- Teachers use assessment information well to plan highly personalised learning routes for all pupils. As a result, pupils make good progress from their different starting points, particularly in English and reading. Progress in mathematics is not as strong, as teachers do not consistently match work accurately to pupils' needs and abilities.
- Pupils behave well; they engage positively in discussions, listen to the views of others and respect differences of others. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning, their teachers and their peers.

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?

- Further develop and strengthen systems for governance and lines of accountability by:
 - outlining clear processes for managing the performance of teaching staff and the performance of leaders
 - strengthening recording and reporting structures
 - ensuring that there are clear links between the school development plan and staff performance management.
- Further improve the teaching of mathematics to enable pupils to develop secure skills, knowledge and understanding by ensuring that:
 - learning opportunities take into account the needs and interests of all pupils to promote engagement
 - the pace of learning is appropriate for the needs of all pupils.
- Further improve leadership and management by fully utilising the school management information system to maximum effect to provide specific information and analysis.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and the management board have an accurate view of the strengths of the school and understand what needs to be done to improve. As a result, they have produced a detailed development plan and provided precise staff training to develop the provision further.
- Leaders have developed a culture of respect and tolerance through well-established routines and a supportive tutorial system that allows pupils time and space to reflect. Throughout the school year, leaders have planned 'drop-down days' to focus specifically on British law, democracy and elections.
- Leaders have an accurate view of teaching, learning and assessment gained through regular learning walks, moderation and monitoring of assessment information. Leaders use this key information to plan for school improvement and provide targeted professional development opportunities for staff. However, systems for monitoring the performance of teachers are not yet fully established and consequently are not as effective as they could be.
- Leaders know and recognise all of the pupils as individuals and respond well to their needs with personalised learning opportunities. As a result, strong relationships have been developed between staff and pupils. Pupils respond well to adult direction. In most cases, pupils have experienced multiple placement breakdowns. Leaders and staff work hard to develop trusting relationships.
- Leaders carefully consider placements of pupils and ensure that they are able to meet pupils' needs through a broad, balanced and highly aspirational curriculum. The school provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities to learn and develop key skills. The school offers GCSEs in core subjects, as well as accredited routes in physical education, art, cookery, engineering and outdoor education.
- Pupils also have the opportunity to engage in Prince's Trust programmes. The current cohort has engaged enthusiastically with the 'Achieve' programme, through which they have engaged in a community project, improving their personal development and employability potential. Work towards these outcomes is of a high standard.
- The opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally are extensive. Pupils engage well with their community through the Prince's Trust. For example, a pupil planned, organised and hosted a charity coffee morning to raise funds for Autism Awareness. This event was well attended and raised in excess of £200. A further example was evident when a key stage 3 pupil recognised that, historically, the school did not have a system for recycling waste materials. The pupil devised and implemented a scheme for recycling papers and plastics which involved designing posters and setting up recycling boxes. These examples demonstrate the school's commitment to supporting pupils' understanding of their social responsibilities. Pupils celebrate their achievements in a weekly assembly, where they receive and appreciate commendations.
- Leaders have developed positive relationships with parents and carers, who recognise the school as highly supportive. Parents state that pupils have made good progress across all subjects and increased in confidence, particularly in public speaking. Parents recognise

that their children are engaging well in subject areas where they previously struggled. Parents state that the school simply 'does not give up'.

- Leaders recognise that systems for reporting and recording information need to be tighter and more robust. There have been some recent changes to administrative processes to sharpen systems within the school. At the point of inspection, the systems were not fully embedded.
- Staff hold leaders in high regard; all staff feel that the school is well led and managed. Staff state that they feel supported in their work and that leaders are considerate of their well-being. Staff state that they are proud to work at the school.
- The work of school leaders and the management board has been effective in ensuring that the school fully meets all the requirements of the independent school standards.

Governance

- The chair of the management board has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas of development. The chair achieves through regular focused meetings with the principal and rigorous reviews of the school development.
- The chair is highly ambitious for the pupils, recognising that while pupils experience challenges, they must be provided with the best opportunities and qualification routes. Learning outcomes are aspirational and wholly relevant in preparing pupils for the next phases of their lives.
- The management board has been involved in recruitment processes for key appointments within the school. They recognise the school's staffing needs and the requirement to ensure that recruitment processes are rigorous in securing suitable candidates and employees.
- The arrangements for monitoring the performance of the principal and teaching staff are not sufficiently well developed to ensure that all staff are held effectively to account. While there is a development plan in place, individual targets are not recorded robustly enough to secure full accountability.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher and one other member of staff are designated safeguarding leads. They are appropriately trained and aware of their responsibilities. Records are robust and they thoroughly review all referrals as part of senior management meetings.
- Leaders have developed a safeguarding culture and, as a result, pupils are kept safe and feel safe. Staff know the pupils well and they are highly vigilant, responding quickly to any causes for concern. The school communicates regularly with parents and carers to ensure that pupils are fully supported.
- Staff training is appropriate. Staff have accessed child protection training and training to fulfil the 'Prevent' duty as well as training on child sexual exploitation. Staff are highly vigilant and are aware of their responsibilities and the process for reporting concerns.
- Leaders have developed the curriculum to provide opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. They speak confidently about online safety and are aware of different types of bullying.

- The school has a suitable safeguarding policy based on the local authority model. This meets requirements and is published on the school's website. The school also has a clear code of conduct for staff and a whistleblowing policy.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers take time to get to know pupils as individuals and learn about their likes, interests and hobbies. They use this information in conjunction with detailed assessment material to plan engaging learning opportunities to capture pupils' imagination. One learner was keen to talk about his manga art project based on his favourite book 'Naruto Art'. The teacher had carefully planned opportunities for him to practise mathematics and English skills as well as developing fine motor skills.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are highly positive, and pupils thrive in a caring and nurturing environment. Staff are quick to respond to pupils' needs; as a result, intervention strategies are effective. Staff communicate well with one another, ensuring that the approach to teaching is seamless. Teachers' interactions with pupils are a key strength of the school.
- Careers information, advice and guidance are provided discreetly through the curriculum and also within the Prince's Trust 'Achieve' programme. A local authority careers adviser also supports some pupils. Some pupils have clear ideas about what they would like to do when they leave school, and teachers work well to incorporate opportunities for pupils to explore these routes further. For example, the school established links with a local provision to provide work-related learning experiences for a pupil interested in farming.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They use skilful questioning to deepen learning, particularly in English when exploring persuasive writing and writers' points of view. Pupils respond well and rise to challenging questions. Teachers encourage pupils to support their answers with facts to cement key learning.
- Pupils read widely and often. Teachers embed opportunities to read aloud across the curriculum and pupils respond with confidence. Pupils' reading ages are tested upon entry and retested every half term. In some cases, pupils have improved significantly. Teachers use this data to good effect when planning, ensuring that texts are appropriate to pupils' abilities.
- Pupils attend the local library at least once a week, where they choose books appropriate to their reading age and their interests. Pupils thrive on this experience; one pupil explained that he had never been to a library before coming to the school. Older pupils attend the library by themselves, to develop their independence skills. These experiences and the provision of reading intervention sessions ensure that pupils develop critical skills in decoding and comprehension.
- Pupils' written work has developed over time and increased in sophistication. Teachers encourage further development through precise feedback, targeting areas for improvement.
- Historically, in mathematics, progress has not been as rapid and sustained as in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils' starting points are often lower in mathematics than in other subjects. On occasions, the teaching is not matched to the needs of all pupils and tasks are not appropriate to the different abilities. This results in short periods of

disengagement. Leaders have addressed this issue effectively through staff development and changes to lesson delivery. Work in pupils' books shows that these developments have been effective. Pupils are engaging more positively. The work in their books and their ability to solve increasingly challenging problems and to use and apply their reasoning skills reflect this.

- Pupils have many opportunities throughout the curriculum to develop their communication skills. They are encouraged to use subject-specific terminology and participate in discussions, showing respect for the views and opinions of others.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is highly tailored to their individual needs and linked clearly to their education, health and care (EHC) plans. Previous schooling information, where available, is carefully considered when planning for meeting pupils' needs. The school carries out baseline assessment testing upon entry, using standardised packages which are adapted to meet the needs of the learners. Assessment results and EHC plan outcomes are shared with all teaching staff to ensure cross-curricular opportunities for success. Targets are regularly reviewed and form part of detailed EHC plan reviews, which evidence good progress from individual starting points.
- The teacher in charge is a qualified special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) who produces highly detailed learning passports in child-friendly language. The passports identify areas of difficulty for pupils and strategies that teachers can use to help. Again, teachers use these effectively to inform their lesson planning.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Cookery sessions promote healthy eating. Nutrition and sports sessions, including boxing, develop stamina and fitness skills as well as coordination.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are well looked after. High levels of supervision ensure that pupils' welfare is considered at all times. Close one-to-one support, where needed, is provided and effective.
- Pupils are well supported by a school-based clinical psychologist who provides targeted support for young people on an individualised basis. The psychologist is based in school for two mornings per week and provides integrated sessions that sit within the school timetable. This is a carefully planned process based on individual needs to build trusting relationships. Staff are also provided with support in providing additional strategies and suggested ways of working to engage pupils. The psychologist has also provided additional support to parents, which has been successful. Evidence of the influence of this work includes gains in conversational skills and social skills. Pupils have also demonstrated increased abilities to empathise and reflect on situations. The psychologist attends all reviews for children looked after and all reviews of EHC plans. The psychologist also works directly with social workers for children looked after.
- Pupils are able to access a number of leadership roles within the school, including office helper, recycling helper and boxing mentor. Pupils thrive within these roles and are proud

to have been given additional responsibility. The boxing mentor is working particularly well with the sports coach to devise the criteria for an awards-based scheme.

- Pupils are safe and they feel safe, and the school provides opportunities for them to learn how to keep themselves safe. Pupils speak fluently about e-safety and the associated dangers of the internet. They are aware of different types of bullying and are clear that the school would sort any problems out for them.
- The school has done some effective work about the dangers of radicalisation through drop-down days. As a result, pupils can explain dangers and some recalled work they had done on recent events in the United Kingdom. Although pupils are aware of potential dangers, some of the pupils do not recognise some of the terminology associated with this. The school has plans to develop further pupils' access to associated language in order to ensure that all pupils understand key words. The plans are robust and detailed.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their punctual arrival to school. Pupils are well prepared for learning. Pupils enjoy the learning opportunities and state that 'no school has done this for them before', referring to a personalised timetable. One pupil stated that the best thing about the school 'is the teachers'.
- The school maintains detailed logs on pupils' behaviour which are comprehensive. The records show the actions taken and the recommendations for improving pupils' behaviour further. The system is in its infancy and is currently being developed by the pastoral manager. Positive behaviour is also recorded.
- Pupils' behaviour and conduct around the school, within lessons and during breaktimes, is highly positive. They are polite and welcoming and are keen to showcase their school and their achievements.
- Pupils display confident attitudes towards their learning. They are keen to answer questions that challenge their thinking. Their responses to teachers' questions are well thought out and demonstrate the gains they make in their learning and resilience.
- Assemblies are used to good effect to develop self-confidence and boost self-esteem. Commendation awards are presented, along with key themed messages about perseverance and resilience. Assemblies are well attended and provide a good platform for pupils to celebrate their own successes and the successes of others.
- Pupils have immense pride in their work. They are keen to show how their work has developed over time and are happy to talk about their creative work and how they have made their ideas come to fruition.
- The school measures holistic outcomes for pupils based on attitudes to learning and behaviours. Diagnostic tests are used to assess attitudes to teachers and self-regard as a learner. The measures upon entry to school are low, indicating negative schooling experiences and poor attitudes towards learning. Pupils are reassessed every half term. The data shows significant improvements in feelings about school and preparedness for learning, which is reflected in attitudes displayed in the classroom and around the school.
- Parents and carers speak positively about behaviour, stating that they feel that the school has helped their children to develop relationships. They have no concerns about bullying

or safety and speak highly of the extended support provided by teachers who visit pupils at home.

- Prior to starting at The Haven, some pupils have missed significant periods of education. The school works with parents, carers and the local authority to devise a personalised integration plan to reintroduce pupils to formalised learning gradually. This approach has been successful in reintegrating pupils into full-time education.
- Patterns of attendance at previous placements were significantly low, and the school works hard with pupils, parents and carers to promote and celebrate good attendance. As a result, attendance improves for the very large majority of pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils arrive at the school, having missed out on significant amounts of formal education. In some cases, this has been for considerable amounts of time, resulting in significant gaps in their attainment, knowledge and skills. Teachers target learning precisely to provide pupils with opportunities to catch up on missed learning and secure key skills in literacy and mathematics.
- Work in pupils' books shows considerable gains in knowledge, especially in the development of language and literacy skills. Pupils' work shows gains in sophistication and use of grammatical features.
- The school has developed an assessment system based on previous levels of attainment which has been converted to meet the changes in assessment levels. These have been used as guidance when planning assessment activities. Assessment takes place every half term. This is a rigorous process which is moderated within the school to ensure accuracy. The school's information shows that all pupils have made good progress towards their school set targets and are on track to achieve them.
- Leaders have worked hard to develop a data recording system that meets the needs of the school. The system is in its infancy and in need of further refinement. However, it does show that pupils have made good progress from their starting points in English and science. Pupils' progress in mathematics has been historically slower. However, all pupils have made gains in mathematics from their initial starting points since starting at the school.
- Progress in reading has, for some pupils, been significant. A pupil's reading age is tested when they enter the school. Highly detailed learning passports specify how pupils can improve their reading skills. Effective strategies such as reading intervention, 'drop everything and read' and individualised work on decoding and phonics help pupils improve their reading. One learner entered the school with a reading age significantly lower than his chronological age and has progressed rapidly to a level that is now age appropriate. Given the short amount of time that the school has been working with pupils, this is significant progress.
- Leaders are aspirational for pupils. As a result, the range of qualifications available equips learners well for the next stages in their education, employment and training. Pupils are set to sit a range of GCSEs this academic year.

Sixth form provision

Good

- The provision for students in the sixth form is good. The school tailors an individualised programme of learning to meet students' needs. Current Year 12 timetables comprise core subjects and vocational learning opportunities as well as opportunities to develop independence skills, such as budgeting, shopping and using the library independently.
- Parents speak highly of the learning opportunities within the sixth-form provision, recognising gains in confidence and speaking skills as well as the opportunity to sit formalised examinations as positive.

School details

Unique reference number	142516
DfE registration number	860/6042
Inspection number	10033585

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 school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	13
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	1
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Mrs Jane Spensley
Chair	Mr Mike Fenton
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Spensley
Annual fees (day pupils)	£28,750
Telephone number	01785 214172
Website	www.thehavenschool.com
Email address	principal@thehavenschool.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Haven School opened in May 2016.
- The Haven School is an independent special school for young people who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan for social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

- Many of the learners have experienced significant gaps in formal education and often arrive at the school with considerably low starting points.
- The school is a small setting, providing a therapeutic approach to learning with the support of a clinical psychologist.
- The school provides education for up to 12 young people; some pupils are children looked after.
- Pupils are referred to the school by the commissioning local authority. All pupils have an EHC plan.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all year groups in boys' and girls' classes across a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, physical education and engineering.
- The inspector heard a number of pupils read in class.
- The inspector examined pupils' work in books and reviewed the school's assessment information.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour and the implementation of the school's behaviour policies and procedures, at the beginning and end of the school day, at lunchtime and breaktimes, and when pupils were moving about the school.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, the teacher-in-charge and the principal. Telephone contact was made with the chair of the management board. The inspector also met with the clinical psychologist.
- Due to insufficient responses to Parent View, the inspector made arrangements to consult with a number of parents.
- A number of school documents and policies were examined. These included safety and safeguarding policies, the school's development plan, assessment information, EHC plan review documentation, learning passports and integrated learning plans. Records on pupils' behaviour and attendance and the admissions register were also scrutinised. The school's website was also checked.

Inspection team

Melanie Callaghan-Lewis, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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