

Woodlands School

Church Lane, Edenfield, Rossendale, Lancashire BL0 0QL

Inspection dates

14–16 November 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders' ambitious vision for pupils is reflected in every aspect of school life.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are a noticeable strength of the school. Staff know pupils and their individual needs very well. As a result, this enables pupils to develop well, breaks down any barriers to their development and prepares them well for future learning.
- Staff are proud to work at the school and work well as a team to support pupils and each other. Leaders appreciate the unwavering commitment of staff and provide opportunities for career development.
- Pupils make considerable improvements in their personal development and behaviour during their time in school.
- Good teaching over time engages pupils in their learning. However, on occasion, some learning is not well matched to pupils' needs. Pupils are not yet resilient and working independently.
- The varied programme of outdoor and social development activities contribute well to the engagement and motivation of pupils.
- Pupils feel safe in school and have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe, both online and in the community. Pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Leaders and staff are responsive to the social, emotional and academic needs of pupils. This enables pupils to feel secure enough to re-engage with their learning and start to succeed, often for the first time.
- Progress across the wider curriculum is not as strong as progress in the core subjects. Leaders have not fully embedded the teaching of careers and anti-bullying into the curriculum.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to learn and play outside.
- Leaders undertake many actions to further improve the school. Leaders new to their role are beginning to analyse the impact of their actions on the progress of pupils.
- Leaders and proprietors have ensured that all 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 teaching and learning by:
 - matching work closely to the varying academic needs of pupils, particularly when in mixed-ability and mixed-age classes, so that pupils make rapid progress
 - continuing to build the resilience of pupils so they are able to learn and work more independently.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn and play outside
 - weaving through the curriculum more opportunities for careers guidance and the teaching of anti-bullying
 - further developing the teaching and assessment of subjects other than English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietors and headteacher have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. The school is well maintained and has appropriate resources. Policies and procedures are up to date and promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Risk assessments are in place and all necessary health and safety checks are completed and up to date.
- The school is effective in achieving its aims. Leaders prepare pupils well for their transition into mainstream schools, or other appropriate provision. Most pupils make up lost ground and are ready to return to mainstream in less than 18 months at this school.
- Leaders, staff and proprietors are passionately committed to helping pupils to achieve and develop. All staff are tenacious and resilient when dealing with pupils. Staff are skilful in managing the complexities presented by many of the pupils in a positive, calm and caring way. All staff are committed to raising the aspirations of pupils who have been unable to engage or failed with their learning previously.
- Leaders are relentless in their ambition to provide the highest standards of education for pupils. The head of education's strategic direction is clear and focused on improving the life chances of all of the pupils under his care. The head of education increasingly delegates the day-to-day running of the school to senior lead teachers, and this creates more capacity in the leadership of the school.
- Strong, caring relationships are a strength of the school. Close links with the neighbouring children's home ensure the continuity of care between home and school. Both home and school are kept well informed of any issues or concerns.
- All staff consistently use a very clear behaviour strategy. Pupils are motivated by the rewards system and understand clearly the consequences of poor behaviour. Pupils respond well, in the main, to staff's high expectations and the structure in place to support them.
- Staff morale is high. Staff work well as a cohesive team. They appreciate the individualised training opportunities available for them. All staff enjoy working at the school.
- Leaders use appraisal well with teachers. Clear targets are based on quality of teaching, pupils' progress and expectations appropriate to the point staff are at in their career. Leaders give informative feedback on staff performance. However, although observations and data about pupils' progress feature regularly in the quality assurance of teaching and learning, leaders have not incorporated work analysis or pupils' opinions into the system to build up the picture of the quality of teaching over time.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum meets the independent school standards. Pupils have opportunities to develop skills in many areas, including English, mathematics, science and personal development. Leaders have not yet embedded careers information into the programme of study for Year 8 and Year 9 pupils, although these pupils visit a careers education conference annually.
- Leaders primarily focus on improving the gaps in knowledge of pupils in English and mathematics. As a result, their progress in these subjects is good and pupils' work

demonstrates that pupils quickly begin to catch up on any lost learning in these subjects.

- Other areas of the curriculum are covered less comprehensively. Leaders are aware of the need to ensure deeper coverage of the wider curriculum and train staff further so that they are confident in delivering and assessing across the wider curriculum. This applies particularly to subjects such as physical education, history, geography and religious education.
- Pupils develop an understanding of British values through assemblies, visits and personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils learn about British customs and the rule of law and begin to gain an understanding of respect and tolerance for others. Anti-bullying topics are not fully embedded into schemes of work.
- Parents and carers speak positively about the school and its success in achieving its aims. Parents and carers are well informed about progress, attitudes to learning and attainment through regular contact and reports.
- Behaviour across the school is improving considerably for individual pupils. Leaders do not focus sufficiently on identifying trends and patterns in less-serious behavioural incidents across the school to assist them in evaluating fully the impact of their interventions.
- A wide range of enrichment activities and trips supplement the curriculum. However, pupils do not have many opportunities to play and learn outside. Leaders are aware of the importance of outdoor learning, particularly for younger pupils, and plans are in place to improve the facilities in this area.

Governance

- The proprietors have a clear vision and are committed to ensuring that vulnerable children receive a high-quality education, which enables them to be able to reach their potential and succeed in life.
- The head of education has an effective working relationship with the proprietors. Regular reports and meetings ensure that the proprietors challenge the headteacher in relation to key performance indicators, including attendance and reintegration into mainstream schools or other appropriate provision. The proprietors are knowledgeable about the school.
- The proprietors ensure that the school buildings are fit for purpose. Classrooms are bright and engaging. Outdoor spaces are available for recreational purposes, but opportunities for pupils to learn and play outside are limited. Leaders are planning to improve provision in this area so that pupils can benefit from more play equipment and increased opportunities to play and have fun.
- Proprietors ensure that the school's website is informative for parents and carers. The website meets requirements for safeguarding, complaints and curriculum information.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The independent school standards for safeguarding are met. The school's current safeguarding policy is up to date, references latest government guidance and is available on the school website.

- The proprietors ensure that adults' suitability to work with children is checked prior to appointment. Procedures for recruiting staff are clearly documented and meet statutory requirements.
- Leaders train all staff on relevant and recent safeguarding issues. All staff take their responsibilities for safeguarding children seriously and are vigilant in their care of pupils. Staff know what to do if they have concerns about pupils, and leaders and all staff liaise closely with a wide range of external agencies to make sure that pupils get the support they need.
- Pupils feel safe in school and they can talk to any member of staff if they have any worries or concerns. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, both in school and in the wider community. Pupils are aware of how to stay safe on computers, but leaders are aware that pupils need more education about staying safe on mobile phones when preparing pupils for transition to other placements or schools.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Regular checks by senior staff have ensured consistent improvements in teaching and learning. As a result, pupils generally enjoy their lessons and this supports the good progress that pupils make.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Activities are well planned to build on prior learning of what pupils already know.
- Relationships in class are positive. Pupils are eager to participate as a result of growing confidence and self-esteem. Staff consistently reinforce clear expectations of pupils. As a result, there is an environment in which pupils know they are supported well, yet challenged to succeed.
- Questioning by staff shows a fine balance of challenge while still providing pupils with many opportunities for success. Staff challenge pupils to think more and, albeit not always successfully, to work more independently.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together. They quickly identify and support pupils well so that they begin fill the gaps in their learning. Teaching assistants are highly effective and ensure positive attitudes to learning and help the smooth running of lessons. As pupils begin to settle and understand the high standards expected of them, teaching assistants begin to make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- Staff give feedback to pupils on their learning, in line with the school's policy. However, pupils are not always as clear as they might be about how to improve their work. Teachers' expectations of presentation are inconsistent across subjects.
- Teachers provide accurate information regularly for parents and carers.
- When learning is well matched to the needs of individuals, pupils make good progress. Progress slows when pupils, particularly those in mixed-ability classes, are not challenged sufficiently, or are given work which is too difficult for them to access.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils start the day off punctually, prepared and ready to learn. Pupils view their learning as fun and look forward to coming to school.
- Staff, social workers and pupils say that pupils feel safe and are safe on site. The open culture of safeguarding around school helps pupils to learn how to stay safe online and in the wider world.
- As a result of the effective programme of personal development, pupils grow in self-confidence and self-awareness. They begin to show the characteristics of successful learning.
- Leaders place a clear emphasis on promoting the personal development of pupils. Pupils often start at school unable to take part in lessons and social activities because of their emotional and behavioural needs. As staff work closely with pupils, they build up their trust so that pupils begin to respond appropriately and develop positive relationships.
- Leaders prepare pupils well to transition into mainstream or other provision within 18 months of them arriving at school. Support staff provide very effective reassurance to transferring pupils. Pupils cannot speak highly enough of the support they receive from school staff while trying to settle into mainstream schools.
- In preparing pupils for future economic success, leaders have not yet embedded a through careers programme into the curriculum. Older pupils attend a national careers conference so they begin to develop aspirations about future careers.
- During the inspection, pupils told the inspector that some bullying occurs in school. Staff took immediate action to address these concerns and now build anti-bullying work early into the personal, social and health education programme. Leaders are aware that with the changing population in the school, staff need to introduce to pupils early on the high expectations of how staff expect pupils to treat each other.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils often exhibit extremely challenging behaviour when they arrive on placement at the school. As a result of the care, nurture and support they receive, pupils learn how to manage their emotions and behaviour more appropriately. Pupils' behaviour shows significant improvements over the time they spend in the school.
- Leaders' records show a decrease in serious incidents and physical restraints during the time pupils spend at the school. Generally, pupils behave well in lessons and the environment is usually orderly. On occasion, when a pupil is in crisis, their behaviour deteriorates, but staff deal quickly and effectively with such incidents. As a result, little learning time is lost for other pupils.
- Attendance overall is very high. Overall attendance in the last academic year was above the national average. This represents a major achievement for the vast majority of pupils, who previously have found it difficult to attend school regularly.
- Some low-level disruption to learning occurs, usually when pupils are moving between activities or when they are asked more-difficult questions which push them out of their comfort zone. Pupils do not yet consistently show respect for the views of others, but the

skills of sharing and working as a team are given a high profile in all of the activities planned by staff. Pupils make good progress socially, emotionally and in their behaviour, during their time at Woodlands School.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- From a wide range of starting points, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and communication. Examples of extended writing are evident across the curriculum, for example in science, and pupils show clear developments in their weekly diary entries.
- All pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, including children who are looked after by the local authority and disadvantaged pupils.
- In English, pupils are able to use metaphors, similes, adverbs and adjectives confidently. In mathematics, pupils learn to tell the time accurately, use the four rules of number and extract information from charts.
- In science, pupils plan their own experiments, identifying the variables to change and predicting outcomes successfully. In topic work, pupils learn key geographical facts about countries and make a three-dimensional map. Pupils make good progress and enjoy participating in music and drama. They develop the confidence to take part in a performance to an audience, which is a significant achievement for most pupils.
- Pupils learn to read with confidence and start to develop a real love of reading. Some pupils arrive at the school unable to read simple words and progress to reading often. Many are now able to talk about their favourite authors and styles. Staff make an amazing difference to pupils' ability to read and enjoy what they are reading.
- Pupils make excellent progress in their engagement in learning. Pupils learn to manage their emotions and behaviour so that they can start to experience success in the classroom.
- Work in books and that seen in lessons shows good progress across English, mathematics and science. The work in some other subjects is inconsistent. Leaders are aware of these inconsistencies and plans are in place to ensure consistently strong outcomes across the wider curriculum.

School details

Unique reference number	140486
DfE registration number	351/6003
Inspection number	10038936

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	6 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Halliwell Homes
Chair	Karen Mitchell-Mellor
Headteacher	Mathew Hargreaves
Annual fees (day pupils)	£19,500
Telephone number	01706 827201
Website	www.halliwellhomes.co.uk/education
Email address	contact@halliwellhomes.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–20 November 2014

Information about this school

- Woodlands is an independent school which opened in December 2013. The previous standard inspection of Woodlands was in November, 2014. Ofsted carried out a no-notice emergency inspection in April 2015.
- The school is owned and managed by Halliwell Homes, which owns residential accommodation adjacent to the school. The school provides education for pupils who currently attend the home and are not in mainstream schooling.
- The school provides education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. It is registered to admit up to nine girls and boys, aged between six and 14.

There are currently eight pupils on roll, four of whom have an education, health and care plan. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.

- The head of education manages three other Halliwell schools. Since the last inspection, a new senior lead teacher manages this and one other school on an operational basis.
- The school aims to 'provide the best quality of education and care for vulnerable children through a vibrant curriculum which fully prepares pupils for their future economic well-being and nurtures outstanding personal development'.
- The school aims to successfully re-engage pupils with an appropriate mainstream or special school provision within 12 to 18 months of enrolment.
- The school uses local sports facilities for physical education and games. The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning across a range of subjects and classes. The inspector toured the site and checked the school's compliance with the appropriate regulations for independent schools.
- The inspector met with pupils, both formally and informally, to listen to their views.
- Meetings were held with the head of education, senior lead teacher, lead teacher and other staff. The inspector also spoke with the chair of governance for Halliwell Homes by telephone and met with a social worker.
- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online parent survey for those to be taken into consideration.
- The inspector took into account the views of six members of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- The inspector observed pupils in lessons and during social time. The inspector also scrutinised pupils' work in lessons and looked at a sample of their books.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including: information about pupils' attainment; the school's self-evaluation and action points for improvement; and records relating to teaching and learning, pupils' attendance and behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Helen O'Neill, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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