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Crossley Manor

Mill Lane, Rainhill, St Helens, Lancashire L35 6NE

Inspection dates	22–24 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	**Requires improvement**
Effectiveness of leadership and management	**Requires improvement**
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	**Requires improvement**
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	**Good**
Outcomes for pupils	**Requires improvement**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders are yet to establish consistently good practice across the whole school. Not all pupils benefit from the same good-quality experiences and opportunities as others.

- There are noticeable differences in the quality of provision between key stage 2 and key stages 3 and 4. Consequently, some pupils do not achieve as well as they might.

- The curriculum in key stages 3 and 4 does not inspire or engage pupils as much as the key stage 2 curriculum.

- Leaders do not have an accurate or consistent view of the achievements of all pupils, academically, emotionally and behaviourally.

- Some teachers are not using the assessment information available to pinpoint what should be done to support pupils' learning and successfully challenge them further.

- Lessons are not always planned effectively enough to motivate pupils and help them see how learning can be enjoyable and contribute to their future aspirations.

The school has the following strengths

- The proprietor and leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are fully met. They have worked largely successfully to establish this new school. There is a passion and capacity to continue to improve further.

- There are high expectations of behaviour, which are communicated effectively by staff. Pupils respond well most of the time.

- Teaching and learning in key stage 2 are strengths, as is pupils' excellent attendance.

- Leaders have established a good assessment system to monitor the progress of pupils academically. This is used most effectively in key stage 2.

- Pupils' personal development and welfare are well promoted. They feel and are kept safe.

- Effective systems are in place to enable pupils who arrive at the school with low attainment in reading to quickly develop their reading skills.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leadership and management by making sure that:
  - the quality of provision across key stages 2, 3 and 4 is consistent so pupils have the same opportunities to achieve equally well
  - the key stages 3 and 4 curriculum is sufficiently engaging, inspiring and purposeful to ensure that pupils are keen to learn and see the relevance of education
  - leaders work strategically to establish a clear, consistent view of pupils' academic, personal and emotional development and of their behaviour.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so they are consistently as good as the best by ensuring that all teachers:
  - use assessment more precisely in lessons to match work to pupils' abilities and ensure that they are supported to move on in their learning and achieve the best they can
  - plan lessons that capture pupils' interest and motivate them, and help them to see that what they are learning can help them in their future life and career.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement

- Leaders and the management committee have worked enthusiastically and with commitment since the school opened in September 2017. This is particularly evident in the well-established primary provision and in leaders' quick response in addressing difficulties in managing the behavioural needs of a few secondary-age pupils. However, leadership and management require improvement because provision is not consistent across the whole school. Most particularly, the key stages 3 and 4 curriculum is not fully meeting pupils' needs. Leaders do not have sufficient clarity about the progress and achievement of all pupils.

- The required range of subjects is taught at key stages 3 and 4 to fulfil the independent school standards. However, overall, the key stages 3 and 4 curriculum is mundane. It is not engaging enough, and nor does it plan sufficiently to meet pupils' aspirations. It has shortcomings in providing pupils with the motivation to learn. Leaders have plans to develop a more vibrant curriculum that is much more 'hands on' for secondary pupils. Recent appointments have increased the level of experience and improved the quality of secondary-age teaching. Leaders have some inventive plans to incorporate vocational activities, such as gardening and construction within the school grounds. Leaders had a sense of the potential of this approach when they recently took pupils to an organised boxing session. Pupils were full of excitement in anticipation of this physical activity and it was reported they were 'buzzing' when they returned. However, the intended changes in the curriculum have not been implemented as yet. Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 do not enjoy their learning as much as they might, and consequently do not achieve all of which they are capable.

- By contrast, the curriculum for key stage 2 pupils is well designed. It offers a range of activities that pick up on the interests of pupils. These incorporate science, history, geography and personal and social education. The curriculum is well balanced, offering a mixture of interactive activities and those during which pupils are required to sit and concentrate, for example, individual mathematical and English tasks. Pupils really enjoy short down-time activities, such as model building or physical education outside. In this way, staff working with primary-age pupils have made the curriculum fun and maximised pupils' chances of success in their learning.

- Leaders have worked to establish a consistent approach to academic assessment across the whole school. This information is used well to inform leaders and teachers about how well key stage 2 pupils are doing and what they need to do next. However, this is less effective for pupils in key stages 3 and 4. There has been more limited strategic discussion by the senior leadership team about the achievement of these pupils.

- Leaders are keen to develop a means by which they can measure all aspects of a pupil's development, including behaviourally, personally and emotionally. However, currently, the information gathered is not as systematic and coordinated as it could be. Leaders have not sufficiently brought together the information they do have to gain a holistic picture of each individual pupil.

- Leaders are honest in their views about the school and their self-evaluation is accurate. The school is led by an experienced senior leadership team, members of which have the

same clear vision for the school. Leaders have been sincere about their shortcomings and are genuine and determined to address them. They are clear about what still needs to be done. The effectiveness of key stage 2 provision so early in the school's existence clearly shows that leaders have the capacity to bring about effective improvements.

■ Senior leaders and the management committee of the school have been diligent in ensuring that all the independent school standards are met and are up to date. This has been achieved through regular checks. Policies mirror the ethos of the school.

■ The school provides career guidance via an external provider. These sessions help pupils consider a range of impartial options about what they might want to do when they leave school. However, at the time of the inspection, secondary pupils, many of whom have only started the school in the last few months, were not emotionally ready to make realistic and well-considered choices. The school has plans to greatly extend the vocational opportunities that pupils can experience within the school day throughout key stages 3 and 4. In this way, staff intend to support pupils to build their self-confidence in a safe environment. Leaders feel that this will 'spark pupils' interest' and ultimately encourage them to have more realistic aspirations.

■ The effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means that, overall, the school has a calm and considerate environment where pupils usually mix together happily. Pupils are involved in the school community: for instance, they raise funds for charities. Alongside form time and the personal development curriculum, this helps them understand the values of the school and, more broadly, British values. Pupils learn about the wider community, the rule of law, the importance of tolerance and the need to respect differences.

■ As the school establishes itself, leaders are securing the increased commitment of parents and carers, pupils and staff. The interim headteacher is particularly well respected by staff and parents. As a result, morale is positive. There is a collective passion and dedication to offer the pupils the very best. To this end, everyone is determined to make the improvements needed.

■ The school has taken the time to get to know and form positive working relationships with the local authorities with which it works. This has enabled them to prepare well for an individual pupil's arrival, build a relationship with the family and seek to offer a personalised package of support and learning.

Governance

■ The management committee is committed to the school's success and improving outcomes for pupils, both academically and in their personal, social, emotional and life skills. However, they recognise that there is still much more work to do. This is particularly for secondary-age pupils and also in being able to offer the full range of vocational and therapeutic services they intend.

■ The small but well-formed management committee offers a good range of experience and expertise. Members are conscientious in their responsibilities, are suitably challenging, have a sound understanding of the progress pupils make, and enjoy taking part and contributing to the life of the school.

■ They know the school well and ensure that it remains compliant with all independent

school standard regulations.

- Governors have a good understanding of how staff performance is managed and support the interim headteacher in holding staff to account.

- They are diligent in carrying out their responsibilities to safeguard pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose.

- Safeguarding is a high priority in school. Leaders have ensured that pupils have a safe and secure environment by effectively promoting the message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Detailed safeguarding records are kept and regularly reviewed to ensure that they meet statutory requirements. Staff and the management committee undertake regular and appropriate training, including that related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism. The school's safeguarding policy is made available to parents on request. It is also available on the school's website.

- The school is in the process of establishing a pastoral support team, made up of a pastoral lead and support assistants. This team's role will be to oversee and coordinate the care and welfare of vulnerable pupils and to work alongside their families. In the meantime, a combination of the senior leadership team and a specialist in behaviour management offers good-quality support.

- Leaders are very aware of the high level of vulnerability of the pupils in their care. They are persistent in cases where the school is concerned for a pupil's welfare. Good and developing relationships with other agencies and with parents ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are met.

| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement |

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. This is because there is a noticeable inconsistency in the effective use of assessment information at key stages 3 and 4 compared with key stage 2.

- Many of the activities in key stages 3 and 4 do not 'hook' pupils to want to learn, and nor do they generate a sense of purpose. Pupils' workbooks show that some work is repetitive and monotonous, and too often lessons are insufficiently interesting for pupils. There are opportunities for pupils to gain qualifications at GCSE and at a functional skill level in English, mathematics and science. However, those pupils working toward functional skills qualifications complete the work because they are asked to. They said, 'this is what you do in school,' rather than because they are interested or see that it will help them in their future life or career. As a result, some pupils are passive and apathetic about aspects of their learning.

- Most of the teachers working with secondary-age pupils are newly appointed. Teachers have good subject knowledge in English and mathematics and are equipped to offer the school other experiences, such as outdoor learning programmes. These promise to provide pupils with a more 'hands-on' learning package in the future. However, as yet, these teachers do not use assessment information effectively enough to plan lessons that

precisely match the next steps pupils need to take in their learning.

- Key stage 2 teachers check on pupils' learning regularly. By continually checking on pupils' understanding, adults make an important contribution to securing the good progress these pupils make in their subject areas. This is because these teachers focus very precisely on what individual pupils can do and accurately identifying their next steps.

- The best learning is well organised and teachers are well prepared. Teachers skilfully pick up what a pupil likes, what interests them and what will spark their curiosity to learn. They then put a good-quality package of learning together for each pupil. Teachers are quick to settle pupils and know exactly where they are in their learning for that day. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. Questioning is used effectively to encourage pupils to talk, draw out their thinking and help them move on in their learning.

- Key stage 2 pupils are visibly proud of their achievements and are keen to tell visitors what they are doing. Teachers build skills and increase challenge as a pupil grows in confidence and resilience.

- Leaders passionately believe in fostering trusting and respectful relationships. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. This has laid foundations for good learning to take place. Pupils feel cared for and listened to. There is a strong sense of nurture so pupils feel safe and secure.

- Teaching assistants are conscientious and skilful in calming pupils, encouraging them to learn and trying to engage them in their work. Their friendly but firm approach is appreciated by pupils, who in turn respond well to them and draw reassurance from their consistent approach.

- The school has identified that many pupils arrive with reading skills well below those expected for their age. These pupils take part in age-appropriate support programmes, quickly acquiring the skills they need to read with fluency and understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Both are central to the work of the school. Teachers' and other adults' thorough knowledge of pupils, and the strong relationships they build with them, ensure that the school provides a safe, nurturing environment in which pupils rebuild their confidence.

- Staff are skilled at developing positive relationships with pupils, many of whom have faced and continue to face great personal challenges. Despite many of the pupils having presented with very challenging behaviour in their previous schools, staff have worked adeptly to help them to settle into the school quickly. The large majority of pupils respond positively to the calm and orderly learning environment that has now been created.

- Pupils are warmly welcomed by staff at the start of each day. Teachers and support staff use a short session at the beginning of the day to ensure that pupils are calm and ready to learn. This makes sure that lessons get off to as good a start as possible.

- Pupils show respect for each other's differences. Despite the complex needs of some of the pupils, everyone is tolerant of each other. Where there are clashes, these are managed well by staff. For example, older pupils opt to work in a different room if they

find working in a group difficult.

- Staff actively promote discussions about difference in people and lifestyles. They also encourage conversations about current events. Pupils generally respond well to this. Where they do not, staff skilfully challenge pupils' attitudes or perceptions. For example, primary-age pupils often watch a children's current affairs programme. They are encouraged to talk and write about other people's points of view and demonstrate respectful and tolerant behaviour.

- There are staff-managed times where pupils of all ages are encouraged to mix. Secondary pupils expressed a sense of care and compassion for the younger pupils. Purposeful joint activities develop supportive relationships. For example, the primary-age pupils enjoyed acting out the recent royal wedding, whilst secondary pupils filmed the event.

- Parents who spoke with the inspector felt that the school had improved greatly since the primary and secondary pupils had been separated. The majority of parents said their children were happier than in previous schools. They said they knew this because it 'was not so much of a battle' to get them to come to school. They also felt that now staffing had settled, relationships between staff and pupils were positive and communication between home and school was good.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Leaders have taken decisive action to address the issues with pupils' behaviour that arose just after the school opened. As a result of their sensitive and experienced support, the school has been transformed and is now a calm, orderly place where pupils feel safe and are able to learn. This is confirmed by the significant reduction over time in the number of incidents recorded in behaviour logs.

- Staff promote consistently high expectations of behaviour. Pupils respond well to these. Pupils are increasingly self-regulating their behaviour by stepping away from a situation.

- On the occasions when a pupil is in crisis, staff skilfully deal with the incident, helping pupils to calm down quickly and re-join the group. However, pupils are left in no doubt of behaviours that are unacceptable in the school. A very small minority of pupils whose behaviour poses a risk to themselves as well as others are supported through bespoke programmes to better prepare them for learning.

- Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained and supported to establish a safe learning environment in which pupils conform to high standards of behaviour. Pupils value the support they receive from staff and appreciate the calm, quiet and caring approach taken by staff.

- Pupils' attendance is a major strength of the school. Attendance rates are currently above those of mainstream pupils nationally. This is particularly impressive because the vast majority of pupils that attend Crossley Manor have had poor attendance for much of their previous school careers. There are meticulous and effective systems for monitoring absence. Good attendance is rewarded and has a high profile in school. Persistent absence in school is below the average for mainstream schools nationally. The very few pupils who have been persistently absent were given appropriate support, which ensured that they now attend much more regularly.

Outcomes for pupils   Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because too many pupils, particularly those of secondary age, are not making all the progress of which they are capable. This is because leaders do not accurately know the progress that all pupils are making and so cannot be fully effective in providing individuals with the right degree of challenge.

- Leaders do not sufficiently analyse the data they have gathered to track tightly on the academic progress of individual pupils. This is compounded by an over-reliance on using often patchy and inaccurate assessment information from previous schools. Pupils arrive with complex needs and understandably take a while to settle. However, the length of time it has taken to establish a baseline for some pupils has delayed their learning needs being fully met, meaning that it takes some time for them to get up to speed.

- Most pupils joining the school are working below age-related expectations, as a result of a disrupted education. All pupils are offered a personalised package to support their individual learning needs. Leaders have devised a good-quality assessment system. However, this is not used as well in key stages 3 and 4 as in the primary phase. This has been in part due to rapid staff changes in the secondary phase of school. New staff are not yet using assessment information effectively enough to plan with total accuracy for pupils' learning needs and to support them sufficiently to move on rapidly in their learning. Consequently, many pupils in key stages 3 and 4 are not making as much progress as they could.

- By contrast, the staff in the well-established primary phase are using assessment information regularly and effectively to ensure that they are meeting pupils' needs and encouraging them to take the next steps in their learning. As a result, pupils in key stage 2 are making good progress from their individual starting points.

- Staff are vigilant about meeting the needs of the pupils who are looked after. For example, staff work successfully to help pupils overcome barriers, making sure that these pupils feel ready to learn and offering additional help with their learning if needed. School staff are in regular communication with carers and residential home staff.

- At the time of the inspection, there were no Year 11 pupils and nor were there any pupils due to leave school. Therefore, it is not possible to comment on the quality of their destinations.

School details

Unique reference number	144725
DfE registration number	342/6002
Inspection number	10048612

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	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Kath Murphy
Chair	Kath Murphy
Headteacher	Kevain Parsons (interim)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£31,000 to £35,000
Telephone number	0151 426 9808
Website	www.elysiumhealthcare.co.uk
Email address	rachel.hayward@elysiumhealthcare.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school was called Briar's Hey School at registration but leaders recently renamed the provision Crossley Manor School. The school is housed in a former residential property in six acres of grounds.

- The school is owned and managed by Elysium Healthcare and is one of two specialist school provisions. The proprietor is the strategic developments director of Elysium Healthcare. She is also the chair of the school's management committee. The small committee is made up of employees of Elysium Healthcare. All have experience of leadership and management roles in education or healthcare.

- The school's stated mission is to 'deliver a bespoke education, developing and expanding the unique talents of each and every one of our pupils whilst at the same time addressing any educational challenges they may face'.

- The school caters solely for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. These are predominantly related to social, emotional and mental health, autistic spectrum needs, autistic spectrum disorder and moderate learning difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.

- There are currently 12 pupils on roll, although the school can accommodate up to 68 pupils. Leaders have initially only admitted a small number of pupils, from a range of year groups. There are presently no key stage 1 pupils and nor are there any pupils above Year 10. There is an intention to build up the numbers of pupils on the school's roll gradually, as pupils settle and the provision and facilities are developed.

- Recent refurbishment work has enabled secondary-age pupils to be educated upstairs on the first floor, whilst primary-age pupils are taught on the ground floor.

- Leaders have ongoing plans to provide further classrooms and other facilities inside and outside for pupils as the school grows in size.

- The proprietor has recently registered accommodation offering eight residential places adjacent to the school. Also owned by Elysium Healthcare is a newly opened children's home which is housed in a separate building to the school and residential accommodation but on the same site.

- Leaders have met with local commissioners of services for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to evaluate local needs in planning the school's offer.

- The school does not presently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in classes. She also observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. She observed pupils at break- and lunchtimes.

- The inspector looked at the work in pupils' books.

- The inspector held meetings with the head of education for Elysium Healthcare, the interim headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and a specialist in behaviour management.

- The inspector spoke on the telephone with the chair of the management committee.

- The inspector spoke informally with pupils around school and, where appropriate, discussed with pupils their opinions about the school and their learning.

- The lead inspector took account of four responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

- There were no responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View. However, the inspector talked briefly with five parents at the end of the school day.

- School policies and other documents were examined to check compliance with the independent school standards, and to provide other inspection evidence, including: minutes from meetings of the management committee; information on pupils' progress; the school's evaluation of its own performance; and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

| Sue Eastwood, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |

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