

# Wilsic Hall School

Wadworth, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN11 9AG

## Inspection dates

11–13 December 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Sixth form provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher sets about bringing his vision to provide excellent opportunities for pupils' personal development and high achievement to life with energy and determination.
- Together with board members, leaders ensure that the school complies with the independent school standards, and uses them as a springboard for improvement.
- Leaders make frequent checks on the quality of pupils' experiences to ensure that their needs are met. The promotion of pupils' personal development is a particular strength.
- Pupils enjoy school, learning and having friends. They attend very regularly. They feel safe and cared for and make strong progress.
- Leaders keep a sharper eye on pupils' progress in core subjects than they do for a wider range of subjects.
- Leaders have ensured that teachers plan engaging lessons that interest pupils. This helps pupils make good progress. Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to challenge pupils' thinking, and move them on when they are ready to do so.
- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment for students in the sixth form is strong. The effective curriculum, helps students make good progress ensuring that they are well prepared for further study and training. The curriculum provides a stimulating range of learning opportunities, which are enriched by very frequent off-site visits and trips.
- Leaders do not plan in detail opportunities for pupils to reinforce and apply learning in key subjects in other areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils learn how to manage themselves very well. Pupils are open and friendly, they are keen to learn about others and their different backgrounds.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management of the curriculum by:
  - further sharpening the arrangements to check pupils' progress, in subjects other than English, communication and mathematics, with greater precision
  - planning more rigorously, opportunities for pupils to reinforce and re-apply knowledge and skills developed in the core subjects, in a wide range of other subjects taught.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - training staff to identify opportunities to challenge pupils' thinking and move them on to the next steps in their learning as soon as they are ready.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher shares his determination to provide the highest quality opportunities for pupils to develop excellent personal skills and achieve highly, with leaders and staff. Staff value the professional development opportunities given to them. They are committed to do the best they can for their pupils. They know, through building strong relationships with pupils, that they enable pupils to grow and flourish as individuals from their starting points.
- Leaders make sure that the school complies with all the independent school standards. They view compliance as a baseline to build on. With members of the board and supported by commissioned external reviews, leaders identify where there is room for further improvement and take effective steps to secure it.
- Leaders have put in place effective systems to record pupils' academic progress and personal development. They have strengthened the way pupils' progress in basic skills is recorded and have worked with other schools to make sure that the information they gather is accurate and useful.
- Leaders review records of pupils' development very carefully. They check the individual plans that they put in place, and support pupils to develop the skills and attributes they need to flourish. Leaders work closely with parents, carers and a wider range of teams and agencies to refine and amend individual programmes for pupils as their needs change. As a result, pupils make continual strides in their development, especially in their social and communication skills.
- Leaders have put in place a well-considered programme of personal development. They ensure that pupils have many and varied opportunities to develop the personal skills they need in preparation for the next steps in their education or training. Leaders ensure that the programme supports pupils' learning about how to recognise others' emotions and how to maintain healthy relationships. This helps them keep safe. This is a very clear strength of the school. Leaders ensure that pupils have opportunities to practise these skills in the local community through frequent visits and trips. As a result, pupils, including students in the sixth form, develop increasingly strong independent living skills.
- Leaders and staff ensure that very effective communication with other teams enables staff to identify quickly any changes in the needs of pupils. Leaders respond effectively, arranging, for example, additional support from therapists. As a result, pupils trust staff to help them. Pupils respond very positively to the high expectations staff have of their behaviour and they attend very well.
- Leaders make effective use of their checks on the quality of teaching and learning. They take into account the quality of pupils' work and information from periodic checks on their progress. They use this information to challenge staff and plan training to sustain high levels of pupil achievement. Pupils' progress in English, communication and mathematics is particularly strong. However, leaders do not scrutinise the progress pupils make in the wider range of subjects they study as closely as they do in these core subjects.
- Leaders have ensured that the broad and balanced curriculum is supplemented by

effective medium-term plans for teaching and learning. Pupils' individual learning targets are drawn from their education, health and care plans. This supports the good progress they make overall. However, planned learning sometimes does not give pupils sufficient opportunities to consolidate and apply their existing skills in mathematics, English and communication in other subject areas.

## **Governance**

- Members of the Hesley Group board provide effective governance of the school. They ensure that the school meets all the requirements of the independent school standards. They foster a strong vision and strategic direction for the school by:
  - ensuring that pupils' well-being and safety remain the first priority for the whole school community
  - making sure that they evaluate detailed information about pupils' personal development, behaviour and attendance to ensure that pupils are supported effectively and can thrive. Members of the board visit school regularly and listen to views of pupils
  - making sure that they support senior leaders to provide effective professional development opportunities, so that staff are confident that they can develop their own skills and meet pupils' needs effectively
  - challenging senior leaders to improve performance, where they recognise that more needs to be done. Members commission external reviews to supplement their own findings and use the information gathered to focus challenge, for example, on teaching learning and assessment
  - ensuring that they recruit effective staff to sustain the high quality of education and care provided to pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that all members of staff keep pupils' safety at the forefront of their minds. Staff are vigilant and make any concerns they may have about pupils' well-being known to the designated safeguarding leaders. Staff receive up-to-date training and know the signs of abuse or neglect to look for. Staff use their excellent relationships with pupils to ensure that all pupils, including those with communication difficulties, are able to express any concerns they may have.
- Leaders ensure that pre-employment checks on staff are carried out and recorded. They ensure that formal arrangements to keep pupils safe take into account the current guidance of the Secretary of State. The school publishes its safeguarding policy on its website
- Leaders plan their programme of personal development and well-being very effectively. They tailor the way that pupils learn about issues on safety to match pupils' needs. Leaders make sure that appropriate communication strategies are used to support pupils' understanding.

**Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teachers know and understand the needs of pupils extremely well. They establish clear routines and maintain consistent expectations of pupils. Pupils value the routines and supportive visual communication aids, which help them understand what is expected. This helps pupils settle quickly to their learning and feel confident to participate fully in activities.
- Teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge, and the ability to select and use it to plan lessons effectively. Pupils enjoy their learning and the steps to success they take during each lesson and over time.
- Teaching is effective because staff use information about pupils' needs and prior learning to plan lessons in detail. They also make use of day-by-day update information about pupils, which they receive at the start of each day. Lessons engage and interest pupils. Teachers work with their staff teams very closely. As a result, staff know, in detail, how they can contribute very well to the strong progress that pupils make.
- Teachers and staff teams are very skilled in checking when pupils need extra support during lessons. They make sure that pupils have not misunderstood by listening carefully to their responses and providing additional practice or explanations to help them. However, occasionally, staff are less quick to recognise that pupils have achieved their tasks and are ready to be moved on to deepen their understanding and thinking.
- Staff give feedback to pupils throughout lessons and record feedback notes in pupils' books. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning supports them very well in responding to staff advice.
- Teachers are skilled in incorporating individual pupils' specific learning targets into their lessons and amalgamating these with personal development targets. This helps pupils build their confidence as learners. They are proud of their achievements.
- The school's common focus on effective communication, literacy and number skills provides pupils with ample opportunities to get to grips with and build basic skills. Staff help pupils to cement this knowledge and hone these skills through the range of visits and trips, for example to the city farm or to a local supermarket. However, teachers do not give pupils well-planned opportunities to strengthen and re-apply their skills in the same way in other subject areas.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Outstanding**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils flourish in the care of the school. They grow in confidence as learners and young people in the school's community. For example, all pupils contribute to the school council and help make decisions with staff about visits and trips to develop their learning. They enjoy being in school. Pupils enjoy each other's company, often making friends for the first time.
- Pupils, and students in the sixth form, develop very well the skills they need to meet with others in the wider community. They practise basic skills training in independent living, such as shopping in supermarkets or in their own time and, suitably supervised, buying a

take-away meal.

- Pupils learn to recognise and celebrate other's differences and achievements. At a whole-school assembly during the inspection, pupils showed a clear appreciation of others' achievements. For example, they celebrated awards in rebound therapy. Pupils also learn to appreciate different traditions and beliefs. Recently pupils celebrated the Hindu festival of light, Diwali. They linked this to their learning about light in science and celebrated their technology skills in making lanterns for the assembly.
- Pupils are helped in appropriate ways to understand that bullying is unkind and harmful. They show understanding and kindness to others. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, and through their daily experiences acquire good knowledge of healthy eating and the value of physical activity. Staff take care to develop pupils' understanding of how to use digital technologies safely, by taking into account pupils' stage of development and understanding. Pupils know that staff help them if they have a worry. For example, staff help pupils learn techniques to reduce stress and anxiety. This helps pupils keep well emotionally.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary throughout the day, during lessons and breaks. Pupils learn quickly after entering the school about the school's expectations of their conduct and attitudes towards others. They adopt these very readily and help each other to keep doing so.
- Incidents of misbehaviour reduce quickly as pupils settle into the school. Pupils develop techniques to manage themselves very well. They know that if they need extra help, staff will be there to provide it. They respond readily to adult support, they quickly regain their composure and manage themselves again very well.
- Pupils learn about how to recognise others' emotions, so that they can gain an insight into the events and activities during the day. This helps pupils engage in activities and accept others around them.
- Pupils attend very well and are rarely absent. Occasionally, on admission to the school, sometimes in difficult circumstances, pupils do not attend well enough. However, work with the pupil, family and other teams is successful in re-engaging pupils, so that they attend again very regularly.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 makes strong progress from their individual starting points, particularly in communication, literacy and numeracy. They practise and develop their skills in a range on contexts, such as in the 'milk and shake café' and in services in the local parish church.
- Pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects. For example, pupils demonstrate strong knowledge and understanding of light, and the practical application of knowledge about of electricity in homes.
- Pupils, who have a predominantly sensory curriculum, make strong progress towards their individual targets, for example, responding to visual and auditory prompts to reach out for

and take hold of objects offered to them.

- The most able pupils demonstrate good progress in writing longer passages, where they are able to recount the important elements of a story or an event. They write with increasing accuracy in their spelling and grammar. In mathematics, they show good understanding of concepts in number work, and increase their skills in calculation step by step.
- Pupils show strong progress in their capacity to communicate their wishes, desires and choices to others. Using a wide range of communication strategies, pupils' responses and skills develop very well. This supports their personal development very effectively and helps prepare them successful for the next steps in their education or training. The vast majority of pupils continue their studies in the school's integrated sixth form.

### **Sixth form provision**

**Good**

- Leaders extend their vision for excellence in preparation for independent living and further education and training into the sixth form. They use detailed knowledge of students' needs and information about prior learning and personal development to put in place a personalised curriculum for students. Leaders and group staff teams plan learning which corresponds to students' personal interests. It also builds on the main areas of knowledge and skills developed earlier in English and mathematics. The most able pupils are making confident progress to achieve external accreditation in a limited number of areas, such as preparation for independent living. Students collaborate with some pupils in key stages 3 and 4 on developing the skills they need to achieve a bronze award in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.
- Sixth-form students form the largest cohort of the school. They are integrated into the whole-school day-to-day experience, shared with other pupils with similar special educational needs and/or disabilities. Students make a major contribution to the day-to-day smooth running of the school. They demonstrate high levels of self-confidence, as they gain experiences of success in their learning and social interactions. They model this to others, for example, in assemblies but also in everyday classroom activities and school visits.
- Students engage enthusiastically in work-related learning and work experiences. Students gain confidence in meeting and communicating with others beyond the school and in different contexts, for example on the allotment or at the city farm.
- Leaders ensure that students' extremely strong personal development is on a par with that in other key stages. Students are caring, open and friendly. They understand right from wrong at appropriate levels. They are keen learners who want to do well, and they behave in an exemplary fashion. They exhibit effective skills to manage themselves and know to seek help if they are struggling.
- Leaders work effectively with staff and students to ensure that students know there is someone they trust to communicate with if they have a worry or concern. Leaders ensure that the arrangements to keep students safe are effective. Where necessary, leaders work effectively with other teams and agencies to ensure that early help is provided when it is needed.
- Leaders ensure that students and their families are well supported to make informed

choices about the next steps in education and training.



## School details

Unique reference number	106814
DfE registration number	371/6005
Inspection number	10053819

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	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	26
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	16
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Hesley Group
Chair	Graham Smith
Headteacher	Geoff Turner
Annual fees (day pupils)	£72,200
Telephone number	01302 856 382
Website	<a href="http://www.hesleygroup.co.uk">www.hesleygroup.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiries@hesleygroup.co.uk">enquiries@hesleygroup.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–12 November 2015

## Information about this school

- Wilsic Hall is an independent special school, situated near Doncaster. It caters for up to 36 pupils, boys and girls, between the ages of 11 and 19 years.
- Pupils come from across the country. Currently there are 26 pupils. The largest proportion are post-16 students. There is no discrete sixth-form provision. Pupils and students are grouped together, according to their needs and prior achievement.

- All pupils have an education, health and care plan to support them and meet their needs. Students have significant learning and/or communication difficulties, most often associated with autistic spectrum condition.
- Many pupils have disrupted histories of education before coming to the school.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The previous inspection was conducted in November 2015.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, other leaders and members of staff. He took account of their views expressed in meetings and in responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The inspector considered parental views expressed verbally.
- The inspector talked with pupils and students in the sixth form and scrutinised their work in their folders and in displays. He listened to some pupils read and listened to their views about their school experiences.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning in lessons and considered the school's information about pupils' progress.
- The inspector discussed the governance of the school with members of the Hesley Group board.
- The inspector considered a wide range of documents, including how the school organises its curriculum, as well as its work to improve attendance. He also examined how the school makes arrangements to safeguard pupils.

## Inspection team

Chris Campbell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

### Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2019