

Elland House School

Unit 7, Roman Road, Royton, Lancashire OL2 5PJ

Inspection dates

4–6 June 2019

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

- The headteacher is determined to ensure that pupils attend school regularly, engage in learning and make good progress. Together with the proprietors, he has ensured that both teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher, supported by his highly capable lead teacher and staff, works closely with the proprietors to ensure that all the independent school standards are met.
- Teaching is good. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together. They have good relationships with pupils and a precise understanding of pupils' individual learning needs.
- Pupils' benefit from a stimulating curriculum, which captures their imagination and ensures their good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and other subjects.
- Work-based learning opportunities are somewhat limited, as are opportunities for pupils to engage in investigative activities in science.
- Procedures to hold staff to account lack precision and are not linked closely enough to pupils' achievement.
- Leaders' work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as is their work to enhance pupils' appreciation of British values.
- Pupils read regularly and are familiar with the work of different authors, including dramatists and poets.
- Few opportunities are available for pupils to practise and refine their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Pupils' behaviour and attendance are good. Pupils say they always feel safe and that they 'love' the school.
- Parents and carers are very complimentary about the school. Typically, they comment that their children make 'fantastic progress'. Parents and representatives from local authorities say that children are safe and happy at school.

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 by:
 - broadening the curriculum to include a wider range of work-based learning experiences and more opportunities for pupils to engage in investigative activities in science
 - sharpening procedures for assessing teachers' and teaching assistants' performance.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - encouraging pupils to practise and refine their writing skills across the curriculum

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher is new to post. However, he knows the school exceptionally well and is also the headteacher of Riverbank Primary School, which is the second of the Timeout company's two schools. The headteacher ensures that Elland House is a calm and purposeful school and has high expectations of both staff and pupils.
- The proprietors have an exact understanding of the school's strengths and priorities and work closely with senior leaders to ensure that all aspects of provision at the school are good and all the independent school standards are met.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has acquired a new mobile classroom, primarily for key stage 3 pupils. In addition, pupils from across the school participate in various practical and vocational activities in the new classroom, including in design technology, woodwork, food technology and science. However, senior leaders are aware that provision is limited, due to lack of space and resources, as are opportunities for pupils to participate in work-based learning.
- Senior leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching, identifying strengths and areas for development, and give teachers useful advice on how to improve their practice. Teachers are highly appreciative of the training and development available to them, which they indicate is helping to improve their classroom management skills and ability to meet pupils' individual learning needs. Procedures to hold teachers and teaching assistants to account for pupils' achievement are not as sharp as they could be. The school's improvement partner is working closely with senior leaders to improve this aspect of leadership and management.
- Staff morale is exceptionally high. All staff completed the inspection questionnaire. All say that they are proud to work at the school and that leaders do all they can to ensure that the school has a motivated, respected and effective teaching staff. The school successfully 'grows' its staff. For example, staff are currently being supported to acquire counselling qualifications, qualified teacher status and the professional special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) qualification.
- Pupils benefit from an exciting and developing curriculum which broadens their understanding of the world around them. They enjoy visiting museums in Oldham, Manchester and other towns and cities in the North West and relish the boxing, skiing, orienteering and BMX 'biking' activities available to them. Some pupils are very accomplished and creative artists, others are skilled horse riders. All pupils like to swim and build up their stamina running and walking the daily mile around the school. Several pupils are reluctant writers, who find expressing themselves in writing difficult. Opportunities for them to develop their writing skills across the curriculum are somewhat limited.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and appreciation of British values is good. Pupils are aware of the basic principles of various religions and have visited different places of worship, including a synagogue and a mosque.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the culturally diverse nature of British society. They learn about the rule of law, fair play and tolerance through the personal, social, health and citizenship aspects of the curriculum. Pupils raise money for various good causes and

have hosted coffee mornings and other fundraising events. Pupils enjoy having their say on the school council, where they put democratic principles into practice.

- Parents and carers are very positive about all aspects of the school. Parents receive daily reports on their children's behaviour. They also receive detailed end-of-term reports on their children's achievement. Parents say that their children are safe and looked after well. Typically, they commented that: 'Elland House staff have done everything possible to make my son very welcome', and '...the school has given my child the self-esteem and positivity to re-engage in education and believe in herself'.
- Senior leaders work effectively with the school's improvement partner, who has supported senior leaders in various ways. Most recently, the headteacher has received mentoring support, to ensure a smooth transition into his new position. In addition, the improvement partner has reviewed the quality of teaching and learning and worked with the school to maintain strong and effective safeguarding procedures.

Governance

- The proprietors know the school exceptionally well, because they live and breathe it. Proprietors are based in the primary school, which is near Elland House. Proprietors know that all aspects of provision are good, because they come into school regularly to see for themselves. They have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and the curriculum and know what needs to be done to improve these aspects of the school.
- Proprietors have taken decisive action to secure new premises, with the intention of enabling staff to develop and nurture pupils' work-based learning skills, in readiness for the next stage of their learning and employment after learning school.
- The proprietors hold senior leaders to account during weekly meetings, which include the leader of the Timeout company's therapeutic team. In addition, the headteacher produces detailed reports for proprietors, which include information on pupils' attendance, behaviour and achievement.
- Proprietors are trained well, including in safeguarding, and have many years' experience in managing schools and care homes. They know exactly what the school needs to do to improve further and ensure that resources are available for such improvements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school.
- The school has a current safeguarding policy on its website. All staff sign declarations to say they have read the school's safeguarding policy and associated policies. Staff and proprietors have had 'Prevent' duty training, which is part of the government's agenda for tackling radicalisation and extremism. In addition, staff are familiar with the latest government guidelines on keeping children safe in education.
- The school leaves nothing to chance when it comes to safeguarding. This is particularly important given the vulnerable nature of all pupils on roll. Staff know exactly what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's safety and/or welfare.

- The school's designated safeguarding leaders are highly trained and conversant with the latest developments relating to children's safety and welfare.
- All appropriate checks are made on staff to ascertain their suitability to work with children. Risk assessments are regularly carried out to make sure that school premises are safe and secure. In addition, school trips and educational visits are risk assessed, helping to ensure pupils' safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Across the school, teaching over time is good. Teachers plan activities to ensure that pupils enjoy learning, make good progress and attain well. The therapeutic support available to pupils is effective, providing them with coping strategies to use when they find it difficult to engage in learning.
- Most teaching takes place in either the key stage 3, or key stage 4 classroom. All learning is personalised to pupils' different ages and abilities, taking account of the significant gaps that most pupils have in their learning due to extended periods out of education.
- Teachers use effective questioning to check what pupils know and clarify any misconceptions. Typically, teachers use information on pupils' prior performance to provide different learning activities which are well matched to pupils' skills and abilities.
- Teachers make learning interesting and have high expectations of pupils. This was evident in key stage 4, as pupils engaged in a topical discussion about the accuracy of polygraphs ('lie detectors'). Pupils were asked to consider whether television programmes should use polygraphs, given their unreliability. The teacher asked searching questions such as, 'What might cause someone to fail a polygraph test when they are telling the truth?' After extracting salient information from a series of newspaper articles, pupils put forward convincing arguments both in favour of and against the use of polygraphs.
- Pupils have a good understanding of scientific facts, especially in biology. Typically, teachers consolidate pupils' understanding in science, before moving on to new areas of learning. This is evident in pupils' knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of plant and animal cells. For example, pupils know what cytoplasm is and are aware that it is only present in plant cells. In addition, they can identify specialist cells such as sperm, blood and nerve cells, and correctly label them. However, pupils rarely apply their considerable knowledge to investigative activities because science resources and equipment are limited.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to deepen pupils' understanding in mathematics. This was evident when pupils were learning about probability theory. Pupils soon grasped key words such as 'likely', 'unlikely', 'probable', 'certain' and 'impossible', which they skilfully linked to fractions, decimals and percentages. While some pupils counted different-coloured sweets, others rolled dice to work out various probability questions. Those with SEND worked with the teaching assistant and were fully engaged in working out the likelihood of different suits of cards being drawn from a pack of 52.
- Teachers skilfully draw on pupils' experience to bring learning to life. This was exemplified in a key stage 3 English class as pupils learned about the use and meaning of onomatopoeia. The teacher built on the highly successful whole-school trip to Salford Quays the previous day, where pupils and staff donned life jackets and wet suits and

engaged in 'water boarding' (involving several people kneeling on a raft and paddling). After sharing photographs of the event, pupils were raring to go, using words such as 'crash', 'splash', 'scrunch' and 'wallop' in their sentences to describe the event.

- Despite the excitement often generated in lesson, some pupils are reluctant writers. Workbooks show that opportunities for pupils to practise and refine their writing skills across the curriculum are somewhat limited. As a result, some pupils do not make the good progress of which they are capable in developing their writing skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare is at the forefront of everything that staff at Elland House do. Staff are aware of targets in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans, and work hard to ensure that they are met. Staff are especially successful in getting pupils to feel comfortable and confident in class and able to share their ideas with peers.
- All pupils benefit from therapy sessions, where they can talk to a member of the school's therapy team in confidence. Pupils also benefit from art, play and equine therapy. Those who spoke with the inspector indicated that such sessions are useful, as they focus on exploring past experiences and removing barriers to learning.
- Pupils are not allowed to use mobile phones in school, and their access to the internet is monitored closely by staff. A sensitive firewall is in place to ensure that pupils cannot access inappropriate websites. Pupils have a good understanding of internet safety. All who spoke with the inspector agreed that: 'You should never share personal details with anyone online...and never "friend" a stranger.'
- Pupils are adamant that bullying is rare and always dealt with. Pupils said that those new to the school stop any 'nastiness' towards their peers as soon as they settle in and learn the rules. Pupils know precisely what racism is and say that it rarely happens. Similarly, they have a good appreciation of the negative impact of homophobic bullying, which they say is exceptionally rare.
- Pupils say that they always feel safe in school. Those with anxiety said that the locked main entrance doors make them feel safe. Pupils feel confident in reporting any concerns to staff, secure in the knowledge that such concerns will be actioned immediately.
- Pupils learn about sexual health and contraception. They are aware of the dangers of tobacco and alcohol as well as the risks associated with illegal drug use. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and take regular exercise.
- Pupil voice is highly valued at Elland House. Pupils are consulted regularly on school matters which are addressed through pupil council meetings. Pupils raise money for good causes, including for cancer charities, and have made cakes and sold them to the public during coffee mornings. Pupils have visited the Houses of Parliament and met with local members of parliament. Pupils take their civic responsibilities seriously and have worked with Oldham Council and planted daffodil bulbs in a local park.
- Pupils have access to a comprehensive programme of careers advice and guidance.

Leaders link with local colleges and employers to provide informational workshops and job fairs. At school, staff support pupils in writing personal statements and applications for employment.

- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their learning, employment and training after they leave school. In school, they learn about the importance of reliability, flexibility and teamwork. At the end of key stage 4 in 2018, there were very few Year 11 pupils. However, all went into further education and/or training.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are very welcoming towards visitors. They move around the school quietly and safely and with due consideration for their peers and others. Pupils ensure that the school premises are well looked after and free of litter.
- Pupils who spoke with the inspector indicated that behaviour is usually good. They acknowledged that pupils occasionally fall out with each other but stated that any disagreements are usually resolved quickly.
- Staff are trained well to manage pupils' behaviour. All know that inappropriate, disturbing and challenging behaviour can be avoided or significantly reduced. Staff are skilled at identifying potential 'flash points' during lessons and when pupils are moving around the school. Throughout the course of the inspection pupils' behaviour was good and contributed to the calm and purposeful nature of the school.
- Pupils know that if they have difficulty managing their own behaviour, they can take 'time out' to collect their thoughts and get into the right frame of mind to learn. No pupils spent time out of lessons during the inspection, despite that fact that pupils in Year 11 were under considerable pressure, as they were sitting examinations in English and mathematics.
- All infringements of the school rules are recorded electronically. Parents and/or carers are informed of incidents as necessary. Records show that incidents have decreased over time. Sometimes the data shows spikes when new pupils arrive. However, spikes soon flatten as pupils settle into school life and abide by the rules
- Most pupils attend school regularly. Parents and representative from placing authorities report exceptional improvements in pupils' attendance as soon as they start at Elland House. This includes those pupils who have spent extended periods out of school. The school does all it can to encourage the small minority of poor attenders to come to school. Staff visit such pupils at home and always provide them with work to minimise the impact of pupils' poor attendance on their academic performance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Senior leaders have recently revised procedures for assessing pupils' skills and abilities on entry to the school and have streamlined systems for monitoring pupils' progress in subjects including reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- The school's own assessment information indicates that all pupils start school with skills and abilities which are below those typically expected for their age. Most have significant

gaps in their learning, having spent an extended period out of education.

- Pupils enjoy reading. Those who read for the inspector did so with enthusiasm and good intonation. Pupils have good comprehension skills and give engaging summaries of their books. Those who find reading difficult use their phonic skills to sound out and read unfamiliar words. All know that they can use a dictionary to find the meaning of unknown words. Pupils are familiar with the work of playwrights, including Shakespeare. They have a good appreciation of poetry and read books in different genres.
- Most pupils make good progress in writing. Workbooks show that pupils write for different purpose, as shown when recounting what they found on educational trips and visits, in creative writing and in diary accounts of their own experiences. Pupils study poetry, such as 'The Sunflower', which they analyse and interpret, and classic plays, including by Shakespeare. Pupils understand the plot of 'Macbeth', as demonstrated in their letters to Lady Macbeth, pleading with her to mend her evil ways. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to produce extended pieces of writing in subjects such as geography and history.
- Pupils enjoy history and make good progress in this subject. Pupils learn about important historical figures, such as St George and St Patrick, and recount facts about well-known kings and queens such as King Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth I. Pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling skills are not as well developed as they could be. However, they are consistently checked by teachers and improve over time.
- Pupils make strong progress in science, as shown in their workbooks, which cover topics such as friction and resistance and animal and plant classifications. Pupils understand that mathematics and science are linked, as seen in their calculations of the velocity of different objects, which pupils understand is dependent on weight and altitude. However, pupils rarely prove scientific theory through experiments and investigative activities.
- Pupils' calculation skills are strong, as demonstrated in their well-presented mathematics books. In key stage 3, pupils have a good understanding of the characteristics of different geometrical shapes. They are challenged to try difficult activities. For example, in map reading, pupils are encouraged to find 'murder mystery coordinates', by using clues to locate items on a map. In key stage 4, pupils regularly apply their skills to problem-solving activities, such as surveying different types of trees in a nature park and presenting their findings in graph form.
- All pupils have an EHC plan and special educational needs. Pupils are exceptionally well supported by both the headteacher, who is a qualified special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), and the lead teacher, who is in the process of acquiring a professional SENCo qualification. In addition, teaching assistants are trained well to work with pupils with learning difficulties, including autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The effective care and support that pupils receive ensures their engagement and good progress in learning.
- Pupils in key stage 4 take examinations at different levels. Currently, a small number of pupils are taking GCSEs in subjects including English, mathematics and art. Pupils also study for Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) functional skills qualifications in English, mathematics and science and Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) accredited qualifications in art and design, computing and sports studies. The new mobile classroom has enabled senior leaders to broaden the curriculum and made it possible for pupils to study subjects including woodwork and food technology, both of which are

accredited.

- Pupils' successful learning and good attainment in key stage 4 ensure that they are well prepared for the next phase of their learning after leaving school. At the end of Year 11 in 2018, all pupils went onto further education and training, in areas including childcare and hair and beauty.

School details

Unique reference number	131751
DfE registration number	353/6019
Inspection number	10092577

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 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	15
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Dominic Macauley
Headteacher	James Docherty
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34, 000
Telephone number	0161 628 3600
Website	www.timeouthomes.co.uk
Email address	elland@timeouthomes.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–20 October 2016

Information about this school

- Elland House is a small independent special school that is registered to admit up to 20 boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16 years who have social, emotional, mental health and behavioural difficulties. The school is part of the Timeout care homes company, which provides care in several children's homes in the north west of England and Yorkshire. The company also owns and runs Riverbank Primary School. The headteacher leads Elland House and the nearby Riverbank Primary School.
- The school is in a two-storey building on a small industrial estate situated in a residential area of Oldham. Since the previous inspection, the proprietor has acquired a mobile classroom, which is situated adjacent to the main school building and is mainly for key stage 3 pupils, who are taught together. Key stage 4 pupils are also taught together in a

classroom in the main building.

- All staff, including the headteacher, three teachers and two teaching assistants, are new to the school since the previous inspection. The number of pupils on roll has more than doubled, to 15. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, and all have an EHC plan.
- It is common for pupils to be out of education for extended periods prior to entering Elland House. Some pupils attend the school for short periods and are reintegrated back into mainstream schools.

SSS

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in a range of subjects, including English, science and mathematics. Pupils' work was scrutinised during observations and separately. The inspector was accompanied by the headteacher on two observations.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and the lead teacher and with staff responsible for safeguarding. The inspector met with all staff and a group of pupils and held informal discussions with pupils throughout the course of the inspection. The inspector also listened to key stage 3 pupils read.
- The inspector took account of five staff responses to the questionnaire completed during the inspection. The inspector read 10 text messages submitted by parents, held several phone calls with parents and representatives from local authorities and considered 12 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- The inspector held telephone conversation with the school's consultant and the head of therapeutic services.
- The inspector examined a range of documentary evidence. This included pupils' EHC plans, checks on the quality of teaching and teachers' performance, and safeguarding documentation, including risk assessments. In addition, the inspector scrutinised the school's development plans and reviews of its own performance.
- The inspector checked various records of pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour and the school's records and checks on the suitability of staff to work with children.
- At the time of the inspection, Year 11 pupils were taking English and mathematics examinations. As a result, observations in key stage 4 were limited.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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