

Elm House School

15 Mill Road, Stoke-on-Trent ST10 1NG

Inspection date

8 December 2020

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j) and 4

- The proposed school will join a family of well-established provisions. Halliwell Homes has several schools in the north of England and a recently opened school in Stoke-on-Trent. The school will cater largely for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Elm House is not yet operating, and no pupils are attending the school.
- The curriculum policy has been designed to reflect the needs of the pupils that will attend. Learning focuses initially on responding to any gaps in pupils' knowledge in core subjects, such as English and mathematics. A range of assessments are used to find out what pupils know and can do.
- A therapeutic curriculum, and support from a wide body of experts, is also on hand. As well as assessing pupils' academic needs, the school intends to assess pupils' personal development through their 'Restorative education measures programme'. This programme tracks pupils' self-care, their ability to form relationships and attachments, self-perception, self-management and self-awareness, and emotional competence.
- Leaders have devised detailed curriculum plans. They recognise that these plans may need to be adapted further as pupils' needs are more fully understood.
- A systematic phonics programme will be the foundation of the school's curriculum. Pupils' reading skills will be assessed as soon as they join school. Any gaps in phonics knowledge will be addressed immediately. To make sure this happens, leaders have already provided training to staff that is specifically focused on the teaching of early reading.
- The proposed curriculum gives pupils ample experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. Leaders have used the national curriculum as a starting point for mapping

out the knowledge and skills they want pupils to acquire. A range of ambitious texts and novels are linked to these plans.

- The plans for teaching personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education are appropriate. PSHE outcomes are broken down by year group. For example, in Year 1, pupils will learn about positivity, how to manage feelings and look after their bodies. By Year 7, pupils will learn about self-esteem and prejudice and discrimination.
- Arrangements for careers guidance are impartial. Leaders have devised a programme of lessons where pupils can learn how to make informed choices. The programme is complemented by opportunities to attend careers fairs and speak to independent advisors.
- Classrooms are bright and attractive. A range of high-quality resources have already been purchased to support the implementation of the curriculum. Teachers demonstrate a good understanding of the subjects they will teach. This is particularly the case with reading.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi), 5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii) and 5(d)(iii)

- The school's policy for this standard is detailed and fit for purpose. The policy explains that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development will be interwoven throughout the curriculum. For example, leaders have identified specific lessons in PSHE and English where they can emphasise opportunities for pupils to develop self-knowledge and have regard to the protected characteristics.
- The school has developed a list of important experiences that pupils are likely to participate in throughout the year. These include learning about mental health, equality, religious festivals and charity events.
- Focused weekly assemblies are also planned. The assemblies include opportunities to learn about important people, including Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, Charles Dickens and William Shakespeare.
- Leaders propose to establish a school council where pupils can more fully appreciate democracy. The school council will allow pupils to make decisions and take positive action in their community.
- The school's ethos and general intent for the curriculum promote fundamental British values. Care has been taken to consider how aspects, such as the rule of law and individual liberty, can be introduced and revisited through different schemes of work.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 16(a) and 16(b)

- The school has a safeguarding policy that is available upon request. If the school's application is successful, leaders propose to publish the policy on Halliwell Home's main website. However, though the policy references the most recent government

guidance, some important updates regarding children's mental health are not detailed in full. Leaders have the knowledge and capacity to address this shortcoming.

- Systems for managing any disclosures or allegations are in place. All staff that have been recruited have undergone a comprehensive programme of training, including pertaining to safeguarding.
- The behaviour policy and anti-bullying policy are appropriate and outline how any incidents will be recorded. The school bases its behaviour policy on fostering respect of self, for others and the environment. There is a clear emphasis on rewards and praise.
- Leaders provided appropriate documentation to demonstrate how they intend to comply with relevant health and safety laws. For example, risk assessments detail relevant control measures and consider the potential needs that pupils may present with.
- Leaders' actions to ensure compliance with fire safety include: contacting the local fire service and meeting with them on site to discuss the building and its use; providing training for staff; and commissioning a fire risk assessment from an external contractor. The fire risk assessment identified several important actions for leaders to take. These actions have been fully addressed.
- The first-aid policy details how to respond to any accidents and the necessary recording arrangements. The policy is fit for purpose.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a) and 21(7)(b)

- The school's single central register meets the expectations set out in the independent school standards and government guidance. The appropriate checks have been undertaken for new and existing staff.
- The register is available in both paper form and electronically. Relevant checks have also been made for any staff in a position of management.
- The school does not propose to use supply staff.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2), 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b), 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b), 29(1), 29(1)(a) and 29(1)(b)

- The school is a former guest house and is situated in a residential area. There is ample internal and outdoor space. The premises have been renovated to a very high

standard. The overall finish of the building, including its decoration and fixtures, is impressive.

- There are toilet and shower facilities available throughout the ground floor. Drinking water is marked as such and hot water does not scald.
- The medical room is readily available and is housed within the school's new office. A washing facility is also available in this room.
- Classrooms are bright and clean. The lighting throughout the building is new. External lighting is also new and is in working order. The acoustics are satisfactory.
- There is a large amount of outdoor space where pupils can play or undertake physical education. A large space to the east of the main building requires further landscaping before it can be used safely by pupils. Leaders have plans in place to complete this ground work soon. Other minor works, including the fixing of an additional downpipe for rainwater drainage, are due to be remedied shortly.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(f), 32(1)(g), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i), 32(1)(j), 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(ii), 32(2)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(b), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d), 32(3)(e) and 32(3)(f)

- The school does not yet have its own website. There are plans for information about the school to be listed with other existing schools on the Halliwell Homes website.
- At the time of the inspection, all the information outlined in part 6 was available as paper copies upon request.
- The prospectus contains the key contact information for the school. This includes: a full address and telephone number for the school; the names and contact details for the headteacher and proprietor; and arrangements for admissions, behaviour and supporting pupils' with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Leaders are aware of the other information that it is necessary to provide should their application be successful. This includes information such as publishing the school's academic performance for the preceding year and any inspection reports.
- The school has a clear process in place for providing any necessary information for reviewing a pupil's education, health and care plan (EHC plan). These processes have been tried and tested by other schools in the group. The information provided is comprehensive and is focused on meeting pupils' needs.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii) and 33(k)

- The complaints policy is appropriate. There is provision for making a complaint informally. The policy also details timescales and procedures for recording and collating complaints.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

- Halliwell Homes have several existing schools in their group. The proprietor has a track record of establishing effective provision for vulnerable pupils. The aim of the organisation is to prepare pupils for successful fostering placements. Pupils that join the school are likely to have low levels of attendance in mainstream schools. It is possible that pupils will have missed substantial periods of their schooling. Leaders have designed a curriculum with the purpose of helping pupils to rejoin mainstream provision in the shortest window possible.
- Leaders have already established a comprehensive programme of staff training. They are very clear about the importance of reading. Leaders have ensured teachers have the necessary expertise to address any gaps in pupils' reading skills.
- The school has been renovated and finished to a very high standard. The proprietor has ensured that classrooms and resources offer prospective pupils the best possible environment to learn in.
- The proprietor and leaders are passionate about what they do. During the inspection, they demonstrated the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure the independent school standards are consistently and continually met.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school's accessibility plan takes account of the requirements set out in schedule 10. For example, increasing participation in the curriculum will be supported by a plan that sets out the additional training staff will receive. The physical environment has been carefully designed so that all classrooms are accessible on the ground floor. Leaders also intend to ensure that all documentation is provided in alternative formats, such as audio and large print, by January 2022.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

Proposed school details

Unique reference number	148133
DfE registration number	860/6069
Inspection number	10163227

This inspection was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards that are required for registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Independent school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Halliwell Homes Ltd
Chair	Karen Mitchell-Mellor
Headteacher	Georgina Fletcher
Annual fees (day pupils)	£29,250
Telephone number	0161 549 2325
Website	No website
Email address	contact@halliwellhomes.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	5 to 14	5 to 14
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	10	10

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Not applicable	Mixed

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	Not applicable	10
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	10
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	10
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	10

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	2	7
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	0

Information about this proposed school

- The proposed school is one of six schools in the Halliwell Homes group.
- Elm House is located in the town of Cheadle to the east of Stoke-on-Trent. The school is situated in the extension wing of a former guest house. The main part of the guest house has been converted into a children's home.
- The school proposes to admit pupils with SEND. The majority of pupils are likely to have social, emotional and mental health needs. Most pupils are also likely to have an EHC plan.
- The proposed school does not have a religious denomination or ethos.
- Leaders do not intend to use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This is the school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation to ascertain if the school is likely to meet the independent school standards. These documents included: the curriculum policy and plans; information relating to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; fire risk assessments; the admissions register; the single central register; the school's prospectus; the complaints policy; and accessibility plan.
- The inspector met with the school's proprietor, director of education and headteacher.
- The inspector visited all parts of the building and grounds to review compliance with standards relating to accommodation and premises.

Inspection team

Jonathan Keay, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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