

Education and residential inspection summary for Elemore Hall School

Pittington, Elemore Hall School, Durham DH6 1QD

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 May 2024

Outcome

The education overall effectiveness judgement is: good

The judgement for the experiences and progress of children in the residential provision is: good

What is it like to attend this school?

Elemore Hall School is a growing multi-site school. It ensures pupils are safe and can develop into happy and successful members of the school community. Leaders have skilfully combined two other provisions into the school. The additional provisions are now thriving places to learn. The school has high expectations for pupils' academic and wider development.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Some pupils live on the school sites during the week. Adults expertly gain pupils' trust to make a positive difference in their lives. Staff want the best for pupils. They patiently help pupils to get back on track with learning. This helps pupils to feel calm in school.

Many pupils need help to manage their feelings and behaviour. Some need support to attend school well. Staff provide considered and persistent support to help pupils improve their attendance and behaviour choices. Pupils learn how to be responsible citizens by following the school's values. These prepare pupils well for adulthood.

Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum. Reading and the development of pupils' language are important parts of the curriculum. Pupils who struggle to read receive effective support. This helps them experience success and access the wider curriculum fully.

The inspectors made **two recommendations** to help the school improve, covering encouraging pupils to read outside of school and working with parents and carers to overcome any barriers to regular pupil attendance.

What is it like to stay at this school?

Children have trusting relationships with the adults who care for them and said that they 'love staying in residence'. Their lives are enriched because of the experiences available to them. Children develop friendships and make progress in relation to their health, education and emotional and social well-being.

Staff make efforts to ensure that they know the children well, which extends to the whole family network. Parents value the staff and the role that they play in their children's lives. Because of these relationships, children are confident and confide in the staff, sharing some of their biggest worries. One child said, 'They are easy to talk to. The staff really care.'

Children enjoy a variety of activities, such as trips to the beach and cathedrals and going swimming at the local pool, among many other opportunities. These enjoyable experiences are captured in photos and shared with family members, giving them an insight into their children's experiences. Staff's tangible enthusiasm and encouragement help to nurture the children's self-esteem.

A seamless transition between school and the residential provision helps children to be well prepared for their day ahead. The integrated staff team that works day and night provides children with continuity of care. As a result, children develop their resilience to learning because they are surrounded by familiar adults.

Children are provided with good-quality and nutritionally balanced meals and have access to a variety of foods and drinks. They are encouraged to try new foods and often enjoy shopping for groceries for the residential provision.

Preparation for adulthood is supported through the 24-hour curriculum. The children develop their independence and life skills through this structured programme of activities. A combination of enthusiasm and a 'can-do' attitude excite and engage the children, helping to develop their confidence to learn new skills. For example, one child aspires to be a police officer after staff introduced him to the police cadets.

Progress and achievement meetings with children and their parents are pivotal in helping to instil a sense of pride through the outcomes the children achieve. One child said, 'I like that they tell my Mam when I have done something good, not just when I have done something wrong.'

Children who have not previously stayed in the residential provision are welcomed sensitively. Where possible, more established children are invited to share their own

experiences with the new children. This helps them to feel more at ease, and new children quickly settle into the prospect of staying away from home.

Effective communication with parents and carers before, during and after residential stays ensures that staff have the most up-to-date information about the children's health needs. Clearly written health plans assist staff to meet these needs, including administering the children's medication.

Planned children's meetings, informal catchups at supper time and more structured educational sessions encourage the children to share their views. They are consulted about the food they eat, the activities they do and their opinion about how the residential provision can be improved. For example, new mattresses were purchased after children said that the old ones were uncomfortable. The children commented, 'You sink into the new ones, they are so cosy.' This gives children confidence to share their views, knowing that they will be listened to and their opinions will be respected.

The residential buildings are well maintained. Children can personalise their own bedrooms to their liking to help create a home from home. Photos on display of the children remind them of the many memories made with staff and their peers from their time in residence. Enjoyment, laughter and an abundance of energy from the children help to bring the environments to life.

The school **meets all the national minimum standards.**

AND

The inspectors made **three recommendations** to help the school improve, covering safeguarding recording systems should allow the school's governing body, trustees and/or proprietor to monitor the leadership, management and delivery of the residential and welfare provision; written reports of all monitoring visits are provided to the headteacher and the school should record a formal response to each written report; and, there is a written plan in place for each child resident in the school setting about how their day-to-day needs will be met.

- View the full inspection report for the education provision:
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/25/114337>
- View the full inspection report for the residential provision:
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/10/SC040508>



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