

Inspection of Elemore Hall School

Pittington, Elemore Hall School, Durham DH6 1QD

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 May 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade 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.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Curriculum leaders are passionate about their subjects. In most subjects, the curriculum is well organised and resourced. Teachers skilfully engage pupils with learning while taking account of pupils' individual SEND. Most lessons are well delivered and ambitious. Teachers inspire pupils to deepen their language use when speaking. Pupils are encouraged to use bold language and express themselves, in written form, clearly.

The school has invested in training and resources to support and develop pupils' early reading. Phonics and early reading support is being embedded. Pupils receiving reading support demonstrate progress over time. They develop greater confidence to further improve their reading. However, the school has not provided parents and carers with information on how they can support their child's reading at home.

Staff and pupils' relationships are highly secure. Staff motivate pupils to engage well with learning. Pupils are responsive to staff input and welcome their support happily. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They are positively supervised by staff to ensure that the school environment is calm.

Pupils are encouraged to attend well. Many pupils show demonstrable improvements in their attendance since joining the school. Improved school attendance is promoted through school rewards. Pupils know that the school will chase up absences if they remain off school. However, some pupils are persistently absent

from school.

Pupils experience a broad wider development offer. It is supported by a comprehensive 'culture' curriculum that brings together lessons that include health, religion and relationships learning. Pupils' personal development is closely monitored. Pupils are set targets based upon their individual needs and from their education, health and care (EHC) plans. Pupils have a voice in their own target setting. This gives them ownership of their development.

Pupils learn to keep mentally and physically healthy. For example, some pupils speak highly of working on the school farm to help their well-being. Pupils develop their talents and interests. These include musical, sporting or creative endeavours like 3D modelling. Pupils speak fondly of going to the theatre throughout the year and have performed Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'. They visit local places of interest, like Durham Cathedral.

In 2021, Elemore School successfully amalgamated with two schools in more challenging circumstances. Skilled leaders have worked tirelessly to ensure the consistency of the quality, and equity, of education between school sites. Governors are knowledgeable. They visit the school to understand the curriculum and to make sure its implementation is as intended. Governors are prepared to challenge leaders to ensure pupils' learning experience is high quality. They have correctly identified that the Personalised Alternative Curriculum Centre (PACC) requires modernisation. Most staff speak positively about their professional development and work. They say leaders are supportive and consider their work-life balance well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not have an embedded system to encourage pupils to read outside of school. This means that some pupils do not have consistent opportunities to practise their reading and phonics skills. The school should ensure parents and carers understand the school's reading and phonics approach so that they can confidently encourage their child's reading at home.
- Some pupils are persistently absent from school. They miss essential learning, which negatively impacts their education and wider development. The school's efforts to improve pupils' persistent absence demonstrates some impact but some parents and carers are resistant to the school's work to improve their child's attendance. The school should concentrate its work with parents and carers to overcome any barriers to regular attendance.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	114337
Social care unique reference number	SC040508
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10322972
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Number of boarders on roll	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Derek Sayer
Headteacher	Richard Royle
Website	www.elemorehallschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 April 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Elmore Hall School is a special school for pupils aged between 11 and 16 years. The school makes provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) SEND. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school is based across three sites. Two of the school sites have residential provision.
- One school site is the Personalised Alternative Curriculum Centre in Durham. This provision is for up to 20 key stage 4 pupils with EHC plans and a SEND primary need of SEMH.
- The school uses five unregistered alternative education providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgment about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, and teaching and support staff in the school. The lead inspector spoke to members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work. The provision for teaching reading was also closely scrutinised.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in a range of situations, including at breaktimes, lunchtimes and in lessons. Inspectors also spoke with pupils about their perceptions of behaviour and bullying in the school.
- An inspector held discussions, by telephone, with three unregistered alternative education providers used by the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils, staff and parents. This included any free-text responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors took account of the school's analysis of its own surveys of parents' and pupils' opinions.

Inspection team

David Mills, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sharon Common

Ofsted Inspector

David Penny

Ofsted Inspector

Aaron Mcloughlin

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

Steve Guirey

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

Claire Webster

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024