

# Inspection of Howard House School

Blue House Farm Road, Bedlington, Netherton Colliery, Northumberland NE22 6BB

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Inspection dates: 3 to 5 June 2025

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy school. Staff listen to pupils' views and act in their best interests. Pupils build positive relationships with their peers. They work and socialise happily together. This is an inclusive school with a strong sense of community.

The school has high aspirations for what pupils can achieve. It works with pupils to build their confidence and resilience. Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning. They make progress from their different starting points. Many pupils move onto college courses. Indeed, the school shows a strong commitment to preparing pupils for their next steps in education and training.

Most of the time, pupils behave well. Staff know and understand the pupils. They are skilful in meeting pupils' social and emotional needs. Pupils value this. They have trusted members of staff who they have identified. These staff support pupils when they find it difficult to manage their own behaviour.

The school seeks to develop all pupils' talents and interests. Pupils enjoy spending time in the extensive school grounds. They contribute to the development of the outdoor environment. Pupils take part in a range of activities that enrich their education. They also benefit from visits to places of cultural interest.

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

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum that meets pupils' needs and aptitudes. Many pupils join the school with significant gaps in their learning. The school has designed a curriculum that focuses on building pupils' foundational knowledge. In the mornings, pupils follow the same core curriculum. This includes reading, English, mathematics, science and the humanities. In the afternoons, pupils broaden their knowledge. They have lessons in physical education, the creative arts and design and technology. In some subjects, the content of the curriculum needs further development. It does not always provide pupils with a coherent body of knowledge and skills.

Pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) inform the teaching of the curriculum. The school adapts the curriculum to meet pupils' individual needs. The school identifies those needs well. It translates pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans into practical strategies that help pupils to achieve. At key stage 4, pupils progress onto entry level and functional skills qualifications. Some pupils study for and pass GCSE examinations in English and mathematics.

Teachers have a secure subject knowledge. They revisit what pupils have learned before and explain new content well. They adapt their teaching to build and consolidate pupils' knowledge and skills. Pupils have their own sets of resources in each subject. These resources support pupils to complete their work with increasing independence.

The school prioritises reading. Pupils benefit from reading every day. This helps to develop pupils' reading from their individual starting points. Pupils become confident and fluent readers and develop their reading comprehension skills. Those pupils at an early stage of reading learn to read using phonics. This helps them to catch up with their peers and access the same curriculum.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. It ensures that staff know and understand pupils' individual social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. Pupils have a central voice in the development of strategies to support their behaviour. Staff meet pupils' SEMH needs well. This results in an environment in which pupils develop positive relationships with staff. Indeed, pupils learn how to manage their own behaviour with increasing effectiveness.

Expectations of pupils' attendance are also high. Pupils join the school with records of low attendance in previous schools. The school works with parents and carers and pupils to remove barriers to good attendance. This work results in significant improvements in pupils' attendance.

Pupils' personal development is paramount to the school. It is integral to all that the school does. Pupils have daily lessons in personal, social, health and economic education. They learn about important issues such as physical and mental health and equality and diversity. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online. The school meets statutory guidance with regard to relationships and sex education. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and about the concept of consent.

Furthermore, the school prepares pupils for adulthood. Pupils receive appropriate careers information, education and guidance. This helps them to make well-informed choices about their future. They experience a range of activities that develop their life skills and prepare them for the world of work.

Staff enjoy working at the school. The school helps staff to manage their workload. It prioritises staff well-being. Staff take part in a range of professional development activities. These include opportunities to share practice with colleagues from other schools. Indeed, the school ensures that staff continue to develop their own educational knowledge and skills.

The proprietor provides appropriate strategic oversight and performs its statutory duties well. The school meets all the independent school standards (the standards) and fulfils the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The proprietor has the capacity to meet the standards consistently over time.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

## **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- In some subjects, the school has not clearly set out what knowledge should be learned and when. This means that pupils do not build an appropriate depth of subject knowledge. The school should ensure that the curriculum includes both substantive and disciplinary knowledge. It should ensure that this knowledge is sequenced in a logical manner so that pupils build a coherent body of subject knowledge over time.

## **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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	132855
<b>DfE registration number</b>	929/6046
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10374854
<b>Type of school</b>	Other Independent Special School
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	10 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	36
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Young Foundations Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Niall Kelly
<b>Headteacher</b>	Charlotte de Oliveira
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£61,994 to £83,745
<b>Telephone number</b>	01670293160
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.howardhouseschool.com">www.howardhouseschool.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:charlotte.deoliveira@youngfoundations.com">charlotte.deoliveira@youngfoundations.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 to 6 May 2022

## Information about this school

- There has been a change in headteacher since the previous standard inspection. The headteacher has been in post since November 2023.
- The school caters for pupils with SEMH needs. All pupils at the school have EHC plans. In addition to pupils' SEMH needs, some pupils have additional needs including autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.
- Since the previous standard inspection, the school has received two material change inspections. The first of these inspections took place in October 2022 and the second inspection took place in October 2023. These inspections considered the proprietor's request to increase the number of pupils the school is registered to admit.
- The school uses three unregistered providers of alternative provision.
- The school operates from Blue House Farm Road, Bedlington, Netherton Colliery, Northumberland NE22 6BB.
- The school is registered to admit forty pupils.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and with the director of education for the proprietor's schools. The director of education is a member of the proprietor body and the school's chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 toured the school site and scrutinised a wide range of documentary evidence to check on the statutory requirements of the independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff. They also considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents.

### **Inspection team**

Ian Rawstone, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Christine Durand

Ofsted Inspector

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