



Office for Standards  
in Education

# Halton House School

## CONTENTS

---

### [INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY](#)

[Purpose and scope of the inspection](#)

[Information about the school](#)

[Summary of main findings](#)

[What the school does well:](#)

[What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations:](#)

### [COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION.](#)

[1. The quality of education provided by the school](#)

[The quality of the curriculum](#)

[The quality of teaching and assessment](#)

[2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils](#)

[3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils](#)

[4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff](#)

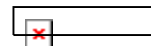
[5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation](#)

[6. The quality of information for parents and other partners](#)

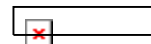
[7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints](#)

### [SCHOOL DETAILS](#)

## INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

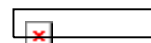


### Purpose and scope of the inspection



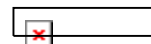
This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

### Information about the school



Halton House School is a special school providing educational day provision for pupils who have 52 week care placements with Keys Childcare Services. The seven pupils who are currently attending the school have been placed with Keys Childcare by local authorities from England, Wales and Ireland. All the pupils have severe emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and are in need of the therapeutic service that the school provides. The majority of the pupils have a statement of special educational need, but two do not have statements either because they come from an area where statements are not applied or because the statement has ceased to exist. Although the school received final registration from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to provide education for boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 14, all the present pupils are between the ages of 12 and 14, and are from white British backgrounds. There are five boys and two girls and they are accommodated in three of the company's homes. The school is in a recently renovated and refurbished building adjacent to one of the company's houses.

### Summary of main findings



Halton House School is a very good and improving school which is successfully meeting the academic, personal and social needs of its pupils. There is a positive ethos and pupils settle very quickly into the school. Clear and consistent management of pupils' behaviour, and effective provision of the National Curriculum enable pupils to re-engage in learning and make good progress. There is very good teaching and team work, and as a result pupils achieve well. Senior managers have a good insight into the school's strengths and weaknesses, and a very clear vision for its future. Their great enthusiasm is shared by all staff.

### What the school does well:

- 
- the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which is well planned and effectively delivered. It places a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy;
  - the curriculum makes contributes very well to the personal development of pupils, especially in the areas of moral and social development;
  - the policies and practices of the school in relation to the welfare, health and safety of pupils are of outstanding quality;
  - there is excellent teamwork between all the adults involved in teaching and supporting pupils;
  - teaching is very good and there is a high degree of consistency in the management of pupils' behaviour, which is excellent;
  - all staff receive very effective induction, guidance and training in the school's philosophy, and in each pupil's approach to learning;
  - assessment is good, records are extremely well kept and organised, and provide all staff with a complete overview of pupils' needs; and
  - the school provides a bright, clean and attractive learning environment.

**What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations:**

- 
- The school should, where a pupil is registered at the school and is wholly or partly funded by the local authority, submit to the local authority and on request to the Secretary of State, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil.

**COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION.**

**1. The quality of education provided by the school**

**The quality of the curriculum**

---

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which is exceedingly well planned and effectively delivered. The curriculum is appropriate for the ages and levels of attainment of the pupils in the school, including those with special educational needs. The school has designed its curriculum to be broadly in line with the National Curriculum programmes of study, placing a strong

emphasis on personal, social and health education. The exception to this is a modern foreign language, but, while this in no way fails to comply with the curricular prescriptions within the pupils' statements of special educational needs, it does represent a gap in the pupils' learning experiences, particularly in relation to the planned re-integration into mainstream schools for some pupils. Careers education is to be more formally incorporated into the curriculum through developing links with Connexions and the possibility of arranging work experience opportunities.

The attainment levels of the pupils vary with some attaining nationally expected levels for their age. However, the majority of pupils, because of the past disruption to their education, are attaining below the expected levels. Pupils are not formally entered for the national Standard Assessment Tests, but they sit the same tests and it is planned for this to continue during the current year for any pupils coming to the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils are, however, entered for Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) Unit Awards; this is an effective strategy for boosting the confidence of those pupils on re-integration programmes.

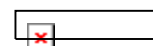
The school's curriculum is mainly taught at the school, but physical education and swimming are provided at the local Brookvale Recreation Centre. Plans are also well in hand for using the facilities at a local secondary school to enhance the curriculum for science and design and technology. Teaching groups are very small with some, who have the greatest difficulties, being taught on one-to-one basis, with some re-integration into the main school. Most pupils are taught in groups of three, with the additional support from learning support assistants and also sometimes residential care workers. Currently one pupil is attending a local mainstream school on a part-time basis.

Curriculum planning is particularly strong and is supported by excellent documentation. All subjects have policies and appropriate schemes of work. A major strength of the curriculum is the emphasis it places on literacy and numeracy, given the levels of attainment of the pupils and the specific learning difficulties of many. The planning and teaching in these subjects is informed by the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. There is a clear link between these aspects of the curriculum and the pupils' individual education plans (IEPs), which contain appropriate termly targets for each pupil. These are regularly reviewed. Differentiation is achieved setting by attainment in some subjects and the influence on lesson planning of pupils' IEPs.

The curriculum is periodically enriched by educational visits to places of interest. This could be a stronger feature of routine curriculum planning. Extra-curricular activities are provided by the children's home, although a good routine homework policy is in place.

The school provides extensive and well-planned opportunities for all pupils to experience activities within a teaching context which promotes behaviour modification, respect for the needs of others and an enhanced self-esteem. To this end, the curriculum is planned in such a way that knowledge, skills and understanding make a positive and therapeutic contribution to the pupils' learning experiences. Pupils' behaviour and personal development are seen as very much an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

## **The quality of teaching and assessment**



---

The quality of teaching was at least good in almost all lessons observed during the inspection and in many lessons it was very good. It is consistent across all subjects, but it is a little weaker where lessons are taught by teachers who are relatively new to the school. This high quality teaching ensures that pupils achieve well and make good progress across the curriculum. Almost all parents, carers and pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that good quality teaching enabled pupils to learn well and make progress. The teamwork between all adults who work in the classroom is excellent, anticipating the changing moods of pupils. Teaching assistants and residential care workers unobtrusively move to work alongside pupils and remove the barriers to

learning. Staff have a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour and the promotion of socially acceptable language, good relationships and responsibility. As a result, pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are polite, co-operative, eager to succeed, and take pride and delight in their achievements.

Teachers have high expectations. They know the levels at which pupils are achieving and the progress they are making. Pupils' individual tasks are built on their prior learning and are challenging. Learning objectives are set for lessons or groups of pupils. These are usually shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons but the consistency of this could be improved. Teachers have developed good subject knowledge and they successfully develop literacy and numeracy skills in each lesson. Homework is used effectively to support the development of pupils' literacy and research skills. Teachers and home carers liaise well to ensure its completion.

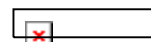
The use of information and communication technology (ICT) within subjects could be improved. Even though pupils demonstrate high levels of understanding and skill, which they have achieved through good teaching in discrete ICT lessons, there are insufficient resources available for them to use to support learning. The school's only two computers are located in one classroom and access to them throughout the day is limited because the room is used for teaching. These computers are new but they are unreliable, and are not compatible with the school's software.

Assessment is good. There is a whole school and detailed assessments of pupils' attainment, personal development and behaviour are made entry to the school. These are regularly reviewed and updated. The records are extremely well organised, and provide all staff with an overview of pupils' needs. These form the basis for the precise and relevant targets which are seen in the IEPs and behaviour plans, and demonstrate the progress pupils are making. While teachers set learning objectives linked to the National Curriculum in their planning, there is a need for them to improve the recording of individual pupils' learning against these objectives, and involve pupils more evaluating their learning and progress.

### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

## **2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**



---

Halton House School is very effective in providing for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. There are many aspects of the curriculum which make a valuable contribution to the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to their personal development. The school aims to foster pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence, particularly through the policies and plans for individual behaviour modification. The school has a consistent approach to behaviour management and this is rooted in excellent support to individuals and an emphasis on pupils taking responsibility for their own behaviour within the context of mutual trust, dignity and respect for others. Pupils respond very well to the positive environment that is created by the staff and they frequently show delight in their achievements and their learning experiences.

Pupils' spiritual development is provided enhanced by a range of curriculum opportunities, including religious education with a multi-faith approach, visits to places of worship, and routine opportunities for individuals and groups to be analytical and reflective on a wide range of relevant issues.

Moral and social education are strong aspects of teaching and care, with pupils having a good

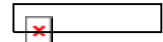
understanding of right and wrong, which is a natural outcome of much of the school's work focused on positive behaviour strategies. Each school day starts with settling down activities and a collective meeting which affords opportunities for the open discussion of the many issues surrounding the life and work of the school and its staff and pupils. This is a form of 'Circle Time' and is seen as part of the implicit therapeutic approach within the school's curriculum.

Cultural development is satisfactorily provided for through the curriculum in a number of purposeful ways, including religious education, English, music, and art. Educational visits also make a contribution to the pupils' appreciation of the performing arts.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

**3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils**



---

The school's provision for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils is a great strength of the school. Every opportunity is taken by all staff to encourage pupils and praise them for their efforts in both work and behaviour. A routine and detailed policy of regular assessment and marking, leading to rewarding pupils for their efforts with merit points for good work and behaviour, helps to maintain pupils' interest and involvement in their work.

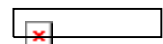
Policies and practices in all the relevant areas including child protection, behaviour management and anti-bullying strategies. Minor amendments were made to the written child protection policy during the inspection so that it fully complied with the regulations. Pupils are very well supervised at all times and there is effective liaison between the school staff and the pupils' home carers. Health and safety policies and procedures provide an example of excellent practice with up-to-date risk assessments and rigorous checks on matters of fire prevention, first aid, educational visits and food hygiene. Fire drills are held regularly and fire inspections are carried out routinely on both premises and appliances.

The school maintains the correct documentation in relation to admissions, amended to contain an index, and the recording of attendance. Patterns of attendance are very good although some pupils arrive late too often. Very good records are also maintained for all incidents, including those which require a degree of physical restraint. Records of sanctions are kept appropriately.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

**4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff**



The school is privately and jointly owned by three proprietors. It has been successfully led and developed by the company's experienced head of education. In the last year, the school has continued the development of its educational provision under the leadership of a qualified and experienced headteacher. There is a simple management structure in which all teachers and teaching assistants play an active role in the day-to-day management of the school and developing aspects of its work. The role of subject leaders has developed well for most subjects. They have assumed overall responsibility for curriculum innovation, assessment, and resourcing. Performance management, linked to overall personal and professional development, is well established and has made a significant impact on the development and improvement of the educational provision.

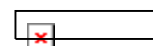
Current staffing levels are well matched to meet the age range of the pupils. Both teachers and teaching assistants are very well qualified and teachers have good experience and expertise in teaching the range of the curriculum. There is good collaboration with staff from the other school to support curriculum development and for some shared teaching, for example, in ICT. Although the school has recently lost two teachers who were responsible for the teaching and co-ordination of science and art, it has been successful in appointing two new specialist teachers in a very short time. They are currently taking part in a well organised induction and mentoring programme, so that they are able to address and manage the social, emotional and behavioural needs of pupils.

There are very thorough and established procedures, consistent with company policy, for ensuring that all staff are checked with the appropriate authority for their suitability to work with young people. The school uses the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) to undertake these checks.

#### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

#### **5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation**



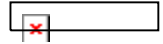
The school presents an attractive learning environment. The teaching accommodation is in a recently renovated and refurbished building, which is decorated and furnished to a very good standard. Classrooms and circulation areas are made very attractive with bright displays of pupils' work and photographs of their activities in and out of school. The building is immaculately clean and very well maintained. The classrooms are small but adequate for the current number of pupils in each group. Due to the small size of the building it has not been possible to allocate separate specialist areas for all subjects, for example, for science, or art and design, or ICT. To overcome this deficiency the management has given careful consideration to the multi-purpose use of each room and has equipped them with new subject specific resources. However, the placing of both computers in one classroom, which is also used for teaching other subjects, limits pupils' access to them.

The school does not have specialist teaching areas for physical education, although it makes use of a fenced hard play area and a small grassed area. The school makes very good use of the community facilities for this subject, including swimming. This supports the development of pupils' self-confidence as well as enabling them to achieve well.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

**6. The quality of information for parents and other partners**



---

Good information is provided for parents, carers, guardians and other professionals involved with the well-being of the pupils. Detailed information, combined with the thorough admissions process, presents all concerned with the aims, purpose and suitability of the educational provision. Individual education and behaviour targets are set, regularly reviewed, and shared with all those who work with and care for the pupils. Detailed progress reports are revised at the annual review meetings to which all interested parties and professionals are invited.

All the required information concerning the provision is provided in the school's brochure. Although the school has income and expenditure information on each pupil, it does not routinely send it to local authorities in respect of those wholly or partly funded by the authority. This information is therefore not published.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

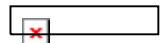
No

***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

*In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003, the school should provide information to local authorities and on request to the Secretary of State regarding:*

- *the annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of pupils wholly or partly funded by those local authorities (paragraph 6.7).*

**7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints**



---

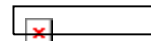
The school has a clear and effective policy for handling complaints which is shared with pupils, carers, guardians and parents as part of the school prospectus. Prior to the inspection, the policy did not meet the regulations for registration concerning the time allocated to each stage of the procedures. During the inspection the policy was amended so as to fully meet the regulations. The school plans to circulate the re-drafted policy to all interested parties.



***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

**SCHOOL DETAILS**



---

Name of school:	Halton House School		
DfES Number	876/6000		
Type of school:	Special		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	7-14 years		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys: 5	Girls: 2	Total: 7
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 3	Girls: 2	5
Annual fees (day pupils):	£18,750 - £28,250		
Address of school:	Halton House School 31-33 Main Street Halton Village RUNCORN Cheshire WA7 2AN		
Telephone number:	01928 589810		
Fax number:	01928 589810		
Email address:	n/a		
Head of Education:	Mrs Caroline Marney		
Headteacher:	Mrs Lynne-Marie Hopkins		
Proprietor:	Key Childcare Services		
Reporting Inspector:	Mrs Frances Gander		
Date of inspection:	19 - 22 January 2004		

---

