

Wilsic Hall School

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	3716005
Unique Reference Number	106814
URN for registered social care	SC008015
Inspection number	331343
Inspection dates	24–25 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Christine Graham HMI
Social care inspector	Russell Shackford

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005). The inspection of boarding was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 08456 404040

www.ofsted.gov.uk



Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

An inspection of the boarding provision was also carried out. The full report on this provision is not published but may be obtained from Ofsted by telephoning 08456 404040.

This was a light touch educational inspection (LTI) which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding students and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Wilsic Hall School is a special school, located in a rural area close to Doncaster. It is part of the Hesley Group. It caters for up to 33 students between the ages of 11 and 19. Residential placements are provided on a 52 week basis. The school admits students throughout the year and there are 26 students currently registered at the school. All students have a statement of special educational needs resulting from challenging behaviours associated with autism. They have severe learning difficulties and profound communication problems. Two students are in the care of their local authority and the remainder are accommodated under Section 20 of The Children's Act. Classes are organised by ability and compatibility rather than age. Some post-16 students attend sessions at the vocational college attached to Hesley Village and there are links with other schools in the Hesley group. The school aims to 'ensure that all students achieve their potential'.

Evaluation of the school

Wilsic Hall School meets its aims very successfully. It provides an outstanding education for its students. The curriculum and teaching and assessment are all outstanding. The provision made for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their welfare, health and safety are also outstanding. Students of all ages and abilities are helped to enjoy their education and achieve well. The school has implemented all of the recommendations of the last inspection report. It has made good progress since its last inspection because the headteacher and senior staff are firmly focused on continual improvement and because they evaluate the provision they make for students regularly and robustly. The school meets all of the regulations required for its continued registration.

Quality of education

The quality of education is outstanding. The curriculum is outstanding and it has improved in recent years because staff actively seek out courses, activities and therapies which will improve the provision made for students and enhance their enjoyment of school. The school has detailed curriculum planning which identifies the provision made for students of different ages. Schools in the group work together on policy formation and curriculum planning. This ensures that there is a range of expertise and that individual schools or staff members are not overburdened. Students in Key Stage 3 access all National Curriculum subjects. In Key Stage 4 there is a greater emphasis on work-related learning and the further development of independent skills. Older students and those in the post-16 provision follow the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) and key skills courses some of which are provided at Hesley Village and College. The provision made for students is closely tailored to their individual needs and interests. All students follow individual learning programmes. Their courses are closely matched to their statement of special educational needs and are based on their individual education plans. The school operates a 24 hour curriculum. Every part of the day is carefully planned and makes a strong contribution to students' progress and development. There is some specialist teaching and this enhances students' education. Information and communication technology (ICT) is well developed. Many students develop ICT skills and are able to use computers to support their learning in other subjects and to communicate with their families.

Students are helped to make choices and decisions and to engage with the staff and other students. The school day is carefully structured and there is no 'free' time because this would not be beneficial to the students. The school day is broken up into lessons and lunch and snack times. Periods between lessons supplement the taught curriculum very effectively. Students acquire social skills while sharing meals with their peers and the staff and their involvement in setting the table and putting out dishes and cutlery provide good opportunities to consolidate personal skills and basic literacy and numeracy. Students learn how to prepare simple meals or snacks and older students help to prepare staff lunches and deliver them to locations around the site. Students choose how to spend the time between lessons and some identify a staff member to support them. Very well-managed support and intervention by staff ensures that students gain the maximum benefit from all activities.

Students are encouraged to communicate in a variety of ways. The school makes very effective use of the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) but students are also encouraged to be effective listeners and to respond verbally or using 'sign along'. Staff promote students' knowledge and understanding very well. They talk to students constantly, reinforcing activities and events and helping them to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Personal, social and health education is implemented very effectively and this is a major strength of the school. There is an extensive programme of evening, weekend and holiday activities.

These complement the taught curriculum very well and they help students to gain accredited qualifications.

Staff ensure that students have very good opportunities to participate in activities which they enjoy but they also benefit from activities which help them to develop healthy lifestyles and participate in new experiences. The curriculum helps students to develop social skills and to live in the wider community. Visits to places of interest and visitors to the school do much to enhance the curriculum.

Teaching and assessment are outstanding. Teachers and support staff have good relationships with their students and know them well. This means that any behavioural difficulties are managed effectively and that students develop very positive attitudes. Most students are happy to participate in assemblies or in sessions provided by visitors to the school. Some volunteer to perform role play or other tasks in front of their peers and they listen carefully to their teachers and other adults. Teachers plan lessons carefully and they have a very good understanding of students' achievement and abilities. The pace of teaching is brisk but carefully adapted to the needs of all students in the class. Teachers make good use of oral and visual prompts and provide interesting and exciting activities. Students make good progress during lessons and they enjoy their education. Some achieve particularly well in some aspects of mathematics and science. However, some of the most able students are not challenged enough in reading and writing in some lessons. All students achieve nationally accredited qualifications by the end of their time in school.

Students are given good oral feedback and lots of support and encouragement. The school tracks students' achievement rigorously and it has developed a very effective system to record and monitor their progress towards their targets. The small steps in students' achievement are recorded using 'P' levels and in some cases National Curriculum levels. School data shows that students make very good progress during their time at the school. Teachers and teaching assistants assess the gains made during a lesson or activity and students are encouraged to evaluate their progress or to decide if they have enjoyed a task or activity. However, students have too few opportunities to record their feedback or responses.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

The spiritual, moral social and cultural development of students is outstanding. Students are given effective social and moral guidance and are encouraged to make choices and decisions. They are helped to manage their behaviour effectively through clear guidelines and consistent boundaries. The staff provide exceptional care and support. The school ensures that students are always supported by at least one adult that they know well and it has very effective systems which ensure that information is shared and that all staff are aware of potential difficulties. Most students form very positive relationships with staff, and those with challenging behaviours make very good progress in learning to conform to normal social situations and behave appropriately towards others. Students learn to play and work

together. Meal and 'snack' times provide very good opportunities to develop students' social skills and their awareness of healthy living. Attendance is good. Students enjoy school and they arrive with positive attitudes. Whole-school assemblies once per week and class assemblies at the start of each day provide a valuable opportunity for students to come together as a group. They learn about their own and other religions and most participate very positively and enthusiastically. Students make a good contribution to the school community and a satisfactory contribution to the local and wider community. They help out in the classrooms setting tables and carrying items to and from the table. They learn to take care of resources and take carefully managed risks. They have good opportunities to experience other cultures through visits and visitors.

Safeguarding students' welfare, health and safety

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The school has implemented all the latest guidance on safeguarding students and there are rigorous procedures to ensure that they are kept safe. Thorough risk assessments are carried out for all activities particularly those which take place outdoors or in other settings. The school actively seeks out therapies or activities which will benefit students. The speech and language therapist provides very good support for staff who implement her systems in classrooms which ensures that preventative or remedial work is supported through all lessons and activities. Students are supported very effectively and are encouraged to eat well balanced diets and take up exercise. School meals are nutritious and snacks are healthy and appetising. The school's extensive grounds are used very effectively to promote healthy lifestyles. Every effort is made to ensure that students pursue hobbies and interests which they enjoy and which meet their needs. The school fulfils its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Effectiveness of the boarding provision

The residential provision was judged to be good and nearly all National Minimum Standards were met. A full report on this provision is available on application to Ofsted.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

In order to meet the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools and associated regulations the school must:

- ensure that all areas of the home are kept clean and reasonably well decorated and maintained

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that the tasks provided for the more able students, particularly in reading and writing, are challenging enough
- implement systems through which students can record their responses.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

The quality of education

Overall quality of education	√			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of students	√			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of students' needs	√			
How well students make progress in their learning	√			

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	√			
The behaviour of students		√		

Welfare, health and safety of students

The overall welfare, health and safety of students	√			
--	---	--	--	--

The quality of boarding provision *(leave blank if not applicable)*

Evaluation of boarding provision		√		
----------------------------------	--	---	--	--

School details

Name of school	Wilsic Hall School		
DCSF number	3716005		
Unique reference number	106814		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1996		
Age range of students	11–19		
Gender of students	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time students)	Boys: 21	Girls: 5	Total: 26
Number of boarders	Boys: 21	Girls: 5	Total: 26
Number of students with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 21	Girls: 5	Total: 26
Number of students who are looked after	Boys: 21	Girls: 5	Total: 26
Annual fees (boarders)	£247,069		
Address of school	Wadworth Doncaster South Yorkshire DN11 9AG		
Telephone number	01302 856382		
Fax number	01302 853608		
Email address	geoff.turner@hesleygroup.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Geoff Turner		
Proprietor	Mr Stephen Lloyd (Hesley Group)		
Reporting inspector	Christine Graham HMI		
Dates of inspection	24–25 June 2009		