

Elland House School

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	381/6013
Unique Reference Number (URN)	131751
Inspection number	344451
Inspection dates	27-28 January 2010
Reporting inspector	John Coleman HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A¹ of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005², the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Elland House School is part of the 'Timeout' company who provide care in a number of children's homes in the north west of England. The school is located in a two-storey building on a small industrial estate situated in a residential area of Oldham. Most of the pupils who attend the school reside in one of the homes. Pupils are placed at the school by a wide number of local authorities. All pupils have emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and most have experienced gaps in their education caused by absence and/or exclusion from their previous schools. The school moved premises in September 2009 from its previous site in Ripponden. It is registered for up to six pupils aged 11 to 16 years. Currently, there are 10 full time pupils. Eight pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Two part time pupils who are post-16 years are taught off site, but are on the school's roll. Application has been made to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to register the current premises and to extend the numbers able to be admitted to 15 pupils. The school was last inspected in June 2007.

Evaluation of the school

Elland House provides a satisfactory quality of education. The welfare, health and safety of pupils is good owing to the rigorous way in which the school provides for pupils' well-being, and due to the good use made of a wide range of external agencies and partnerships. All the required safeguarding regulations are met. A satisfactory curriculum combined with teaching and assessment which are also satisfactory, leads to pupils making satisfactory progress in their learning. Overall, because of the care and commitment of staff, behaviour is satisfactory and provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the school has updated its policies, moved premises and developed its assessment procedures. This represents satisfactory improvement. The school meets the vast majority of the regulations for continued registration as an independent school.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

Quality of education

The overall quality of education is satisfactory. The satisfactory curriculum provides a broad range of subjects which take into account the needs and interests of pupils as identified on their individual education plans. Basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are taught to all pupils in the school setting. Other subjects include science, art, drama, physical education (PE) and personal, social and health education (PSHE). These are taught both in school and in other settings. The school's partnerships with other providers are a strength of curriculum provision. For example, a local educational farm is used regularly to offer pupils opportunities in environmental studies and cookery. They learn about food hygiene, how to compose a basic diet, realise the scientific principles of cooking and cost out how much cheaper home cooking is as opposed to 'take aways.' Some pupils study construction, hair and beauty or catering through attending courses at a further education college and a youth engagement centre. Equine stable management is also an option which some pupils participate in. One current non-attending pupil receives vocational training at home from a qualified hairdresser and is working towards an accreditation in hair and beauty. Although there are no extra-curricular activities in school, the children's homes provide a variety of out-of-school experiences. Trips out and visitors to school make a satisfactory contribution to enriching the curriculum.

The curriculum timetable has recently been reviewed to increase the amount of time available by reducing breaks between lessons and starting the school day earlier. This is successfully increasing the amount of time for pupils to learn. There are suitable schemes of work in place for all subjects. The planning for each subject resulting from these schemes is too broad and lacks details of the specific skills and knowledge which pupils are expected to learn.

The effectiveness of teaching and assessment in meeting the full range of pupils' needs is satisfactory. Lessons are delivered by a mixture of teachers, and support workers who are guided by the teachers. Some lessons are delivered by visiting teachers and some by teachers in off-site locations. An example of good teaching was seen in a lesson given by the visiting teacher for kickboxing. He commands the respect of the pupils by giving clear explanations and demonstrations of the skills to be learned. Pupils respond well, paying attention and concentrating hard during physical exercise sessions. Learning is sequential and builds step by step because of the teacher's good understanding and delivery.

The teacher in charge provides most of the teaching for pupils to learn the basic skills. During the inspection she was absent and the company brought in a teacher from another of Timeout's schools. Teachers are well prepared, have good subject knowledge and apply good educational techniques and strategies. Support workers are well guided by teachers so that they are clear about the content of the lesson. The satisfactory learning which pupils make as a result of the teaching is hindered by two significant factors. First, the planning of lessons concentrates too much on the activities which pupils will do and not enough on the learning which will result from this. Consequently, all pupils tend to complete the same activity. There is insufficient

regard for the different starting points of different pupils so that their learning does not build step by step from what they already know and can do. Second, despite the good behaviour management skills of staff which ensure that disruption is kept within reasonable limits, inconsistencies in the expectations of pupils' behaviour lead to some interruptions to learning and this slows their progress. Even so, pupils make satisfactory progress and engage successfully in most tasks. The relationships between staff and pupils are good for the most part and this enables any interruptions to learning to be quickly managed.

Pupils are assessed on entry to the school and at regular intervals for their National Curriculum levels in English and mathematics. This is a relatively recent development and is not yet used sufficiently well to inform the teachers about what pupils should learn in lessons or to measure their progress over time. Assessments of pupils' social, emotional and behavioural needs are used rigorously to effectively target improvements in these areas.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. From very low starting points and with poor confidence and self-esteem when they join the school, pupils improve their communication skills, learn vocational trades and gain some accredited certificates. Since the last inspection, 11 pupils have moved on from the school with various levels of achievement. Some have gained certificates in first aid, health and safety, food hygiene and adult literacy and numeracy. Additionally, pupils have achieved belt grades in kickboxing. Stable management accreditation was attained by one pupil shortly after leaving the school. Another pupil left to do A levels and was supported by the school which provided a tutor. Current pupils have achieved some accredited qualifications, though many pupils feel they ought to be better informed about these and that they should be achieving more. The school and pupils' expectations of academic achievement are not high enough. Comments from pupils' questionnaires and in discussion during the inspection show that they do not expect to gain many qualifications and are not sure about their future aspirations. They do not talk with confidence about their academic targets in the same way as they do about their behavioural targets.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The quality of provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to make the right choices in their lives through the school's promotion of moral and ethical values. Pupils' self-esteem and confidence is improved through the consistent use of praise and encouragement by the staff. Attendance is good and most pupils say they enjoy school. Their moral development is aided by a range of rewards and sanctions which are used by the school to motivate pupils to behave well and to deter any inappropriate responses. The result is that pupils generally improve their behaviour demonstrating increasing responsibility for their own actions. Overall, behaviour is satisfactory because there are some outbursts of inappropriate language and occasional refusals to cooperate with the staff's wishes. Pupils' knowledge of other cultures is suitably developed through their involvement in projects such as raising funds for the victims of the Haiti

disaster. Early links are being made with schools in Africa and India to extend their international understanding but this is yet to impact on pupils' learning. Pupils study world religions and some have visited Christian churches and a Sikh temple. In the local community, pupils gain from visitors such as a graffiti artist, and they proudly show the art boards which they completed and are in the process of erecting in the outdoor area. Pupils say that they do not have enough opportunities to consult with the school so that they can air their opinions. A Youth Council is being established and pupils appreciate this new opportunity to express their views and to be involved in decisions about their school. Through this they are learning about democracy and organisation.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. The school is very rigorous in its assessment of risk and uses this information effectively to keep pupils safe from harm. The school works extremely well with other agencies to safeguard pupils and to promote their well-being. Policies and staff training for child protection and first aid are up to date and regularly prioritised. Staff are vigilant and caring in their supervision of pupils and pupils say that they feel safe and can turn to staff for help if it is needed. Vetting and checking procedures for staff are robust and fully comply with the requirements. However, the admission register is not kept in accordance with the regulations. Good behaviour is promoted satisfactorily by the school though inconsistencies exist in the boundaries set by staff. The programme for PSHE includes sex, health and drugs education and, as a result, pupils are aware of the safe practice which is needed. Pupils participate very well in physical exercise, they learn about healthy food but not enough challenge or support is given to encourage pupils to reduce or cut out their smoking habit. The school meets the requirements of the Disability and Discrimination Act.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school carries out all the required checks on staff prior to their appointment including those with the Criminal Records Bureau. A single central register records all the required details and meets all the regulations.

School's premises and accommodation

The school has two offices and a general reception area which provide a communal dining facility at lunchtimes. There are three classrooms and a computer suite giving access to the internet. Outside is a small hard-surfaced area suitable for rest breaks which is being developed to include flower borders. There are no separate washroom facilities for staff and pupils and this does not meet the regulatory requirements. The school makes use of a variety of off-site provision including an educational farm setting, local grassed playing fields and the swimming baths.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Parents and carers receive a prospectus when a pupil starts at the school containing many helpful policies and information about the school's procedures. Reports are sent home which detail the attainment and progress of pupils together with information about pupils' personal development. Regular reviews are completed related to the pupils' statements of special education needs and the resulting individual education plans, and parents and carers can attend. A website is available which gives brief information about the parent company 'Timeout' but this is not up to date. Good communications are in place with the placing local authorities but the school does not meet the regulation which requires an annual statement of income and expenditure to be sent to them.

Procedures for handling complaints

The procedures meet all the requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of teaching and assessment (standard 1) and must:

- ensure that the prior attainments of pupils are taken into account when planning lessons (paragraph 1(3) (d)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- maintain an admission register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006?⁴ (paragraph 3(9)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

³ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm

⁴ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/20061751.htm

- provide sufficient washrooms for staff and pupils, including facilities for pupils with special needs, which take account of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(k)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- ensure that local authorities who fund or partly fund pupils at the school are provided with an annual account of income and expenditure (paragraph 6(8)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Ensure that all teaching and support staff are consistent in their expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Make more effective use of assessment information on pupils' attainment to provide learning opportunities which build on pupils' existing skills and knowledge and provide suitable levels of challenge to interest and motivate pupils.
- Plan lessons which focus more on what pupils will learn rather than the activities pupils will do.

Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

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

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development			✓	
The behaviour of pupils			✓	

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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The quality of boarding provision

Evaluation of boarding provision				
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School details

Name of school	Elland House School		
DCSF number	381/6013		
Unique reference number (URN)	131751		
Type of school	Special day school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	June 2006		
Age range of pupils	11-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 3	Girls: 7	Total: 10
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 1	Total: 2
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 2	Girls: 6	Total: 8
Annual fees (day pupils)	£26,000		
Address of school	Unit 7 Royton Oldham OL2 5PJ		
Telephone number	0161 628 3600		
Fax number	0161 628 3600		
Email address	ellandhouse@aol.com		
Headteacher	Jan Murray		
Proprietor	Janet Lumb		
Reporting inspector	John Coleman HMI		
Dates of inspection	27-28 January 2010		