

Elland House School

Independent Special School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	381/6013
Unique Reference Number	131751
Inspection number	301518
Inspection dates	19 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Honoree Gordon HMI

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).

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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 Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Elland House School is located in a Pennine mill town. The school provides education for pupils with severe emotional, behavioural and social difficulties (EBSD) who live in *Timeout* registered children's homes nearby. Pupils stay at the school for various lengths of time, depending on the requirements of their placement by local authorities. Some pupils have experienced the breakdown of several previous placements, have been excluded from other schools or have been in trouble with the law. There are currently three pupils on roll, aged from 12 to 15 years. The school was registered in June 2006; this is the school's first inspection.

Evaluation of the school

Elland House School provides good quality education which allows young people who have had particularly difficult lives and whose education has been significantly disrupted to make good progress in their personal development and to begin to achieve. The school believes that every young person has the right to achieve his or her potential and it succeeds in promoting this aim. The school meets all but two of the regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum, to make it easy for a pupil to return to mainstream school if this proves possible. The curriculum is good, with an appropriate balance of subjects put together in a way which starts with pupils' interests and works outwards to bring in different subjects. This integrated approach, based on topics which inter-relate, develops pupils' confidence and encourages a more positive attitude to learning than in the past.

The curriculum is flexible so as to meet the needs of the different pupils. After an initial assessment, teachers establish individual programmes of work. Pupils are encouraged to pursue particular interests. For example, a Key Stage 4 pupil has followed an interest in horse-riding, leading to a work placement in animal care and the offer of further education and study related to this. Another pupil is preparing an art exhibition. This personalisation of the curriculum successfully engages pupils, prompting renewed interest in learning overall.

There is a good focus on developing pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy, reinforced by work in other subjects and by educational visits out of school. These visits are led by the care staff. They form part of an extensive programme of activities planned by the teachers to supplement the morning curriculum. An educational visit to Haworth, for example, is linked to work on reading and to local geography and history, as well as to the practical aspects of travelling and seeking information. Much of the work in lessons is aimed at filling in gaps from disrupted education in the past.

The school benefits from an adviser who has considerable experience in the education of EBSD pupils, good ideas and useful contacts. These have made the provision exciting and relevant for pupils. Good links operate with other educational providers and outside agencies, such as the local further education colleges, which provide opportunities for vocational education and work-related placements. In this way, the school has been able to extend the range of subjects and activities it can offer, especially in vocational learning and in recreational pursuits. One such example is the very good link with *Cool UK*, a local provider, for the provision of vocational education. Older pupils follow full-time or part-time courses there in subjects like information and communication technology, and building construction. These provide good opportunities for pupils to gain qualifications, through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) award scheme or units of accreditation from the Association of Qualifications Alliance (AQA).

Because of the nature of pupils' difficulties, the school has to place limits on the amount of freedom pupils can have. However, this acts as a barrier to developing independence and to preparing them for life when they leave school. The ASDAN and AQA units go some way to making up for this, as they include such topics as money management and preparation for employment. The school seeks out opportunities for pupils to work with others whilst supervised, so as to further their social and team-working skills.

Teaching is good. Though new to the school, the two teachers are experienced and well-qualified. This is evident in lessons which are well-planned and delivered, and which hold the pupils' interests for increasing periods of time. Lessons are suitably challenging and draw on a good range of methods and a good variety of activities to hold interest and to keep pupils on task.

The systems for assessing pupils' progress are satisfactory. At the end of each lesson, pupils and staff review the lessons together to see whether aims have been met. Pupils' progress is evaluated by reference to their targets, usually related to improving aspects of behaviour in small steps. Where appropriate, reference is made to National Curriculum levels. Care staff attend lessons, which helps the continuity of education between school and home. Teachers and care staff meet formally to exchange information on pupils' progress. However, these arrangements do not

cover all aspects of pupils' work in equal depth or detail. The systems do not reflect fully how the two aspects, care and education, inter-relate or overlap.

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall, and good progress in their personal development, especially in their social skills and in learning to manage their own behaviour. Pupil placements are often short-term and pupils' attention span and concentration in class limit academic progress. Pupils make good progress toward their specific individual targets for personal development.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is given a high priority because of the nature of pupils' difficulties. Given their starting points, pupils make good progress in learning to manage their behaviour.

Behaviour is satisfactory, encouraged by a positive rewards system. Pupils follow personal targets related to their behaviour and to how well they can relate to other people. The teachers' gentle, yet firm and encouraging approach builds up very good relationships between pupils and teachers. This in turn helps to develop pupils' trust, engendering positive attitudes to learning. Teachers are particularly skilled at negotiating, so that pupils learn to take responsibility for their own learning through having to make choices and decisions. Conflicts are skilfully avoided and, as a result, there have been no instances of formal restraint necessary in the school.

Lessons in personal, social and health education (PSHE) include drug education and education about sex and relationships. Much of the PSHE work overlaps with work done by the care staff in the homes. Outside agencies and professionals, such as the looked-after children's nurse, provide further input and support. However, this complexity means that the overall picture of provision for each child is not clear, as to whether all relevant content is covered and in what way. In religious education and in other subjects, pupils learn about different cultures and faiths, and the importance of dignity and respect for individuals. The programme for this meets requirements. It responds to individual pupils' needs, but it is too informal and it does not always show how continuity in these subjects is being provided over time. There is some provision for education about citizenship, but this is not sufficiently well planned to meet the requirement.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for welfare, health and safety is good. The required policies to underpin this and to help safeguard children are all in place, although some would benefit from review and updating. For example, the anti-bullying policy could usefully include strategies to combat the risks from text and mobile phone bullying. Opportunities for pupils to develop their independence are restricted because of the

nature of pupils' difficulties and the need to safeguard them and others. There are a number of good additional welfare policies, such as for the safe use of the internet.

The school has a clear set of values which are aimed at providing a safe environment in which pupils can develop their potential. The care and control of pupils is built on good personal and professional relationships and positive discipline. The staff treat the pupils with respect and dignity. Parents' pre-inspection questionnaire returns and pupils' comments show that pupils are happy in their placement at the school and in the homes. The company has continued to support pupils approaching age 16 longer than the minimum time required, which reflects the strong emphasis managers give to pupils' well-being. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All the required checks prior to staff taking up an appointment at the school have been completed satisfactorily. These include checks with the Criminal Records Bureau.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises are satisfactory, clean and tidy and meet all but one of the requirements. The school occupies bright and cheerful modern premises consisting of two classrooms with a computer and internet access. However, there are no specialist facilities for science, drama/dance, design technology, music or physical education. Some environmental science is taught at one of the homes in a classroom area there. Pupils take part in sporting activities locally. There is no designated outside play area, but there is a small area outside for rest at break-time, which is sufficient. The washrooms are shared with office staff. Though pupils are closely supervised, this arrangement does not meet the regulation.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

An attractive brochure provides all the required information for parents and others. It makes clear what additional information the school holds which parents may request. Written reports on pupils' progress are issued at appropriate points, normally half-termly, depending on the length of the pupil's placement.

The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school's procedures for handling complaints meet all the requirements of the regulation.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (standard 2) and must:

- improve the provision for education about citizenship, in order to provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England (paragraph(2)(d)).

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

- provide separate 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)).

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:

- further develop the assessment policy and practices in order to provide a clear overview of the contribution made by both care and educational aspects to pupils' overall progress
- review school policies regularly to ensure that they are up to date
- consider whether accommodation could be improved to provide any specialist teaching areas, such as for science, design technology, or drama/dance.

School details

Name of school	Elland House School		
DfES number	381/6013		
Unique reference number	131751		
Type of school	Special day school for pupils with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	June 2006		
Age range of pupils	11-16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 3	Total: 3
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 3	Total: 3
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ within overall care fees		
Address of school	Unit 1a Ripponden Mill Mill Fold Ripponden West Yorks HX6 4DH		
Telephone number	07786 657156		
Email address	timeouthomes@aol.com		
Education adviser	Mrs Caroline Potter		
Proprietor	Mrs Janet Lumb		
Reporting inspector	Honoree Gordon HMI		
Dates of inspection	19 June 2007		