

Inspection of Woodlands

Church Lane, Edenfield, Rossendale, Lancashire BL0 0QL

Inspection dates: 28 to 30 September 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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?

Woodlands is a caring and nurturing place. The proprietor body, leaders and staff have high expectations of all pupils. Together, they enable pupils who have previously experienced long periods out of school to re-engage with their learning and achieve well. A high proportion of pupils move on to mainstream education.

Pupils develop very positive relationships with staff. This enables them to foster trust and respect for adults. Staff know pupils well. Pupils are supported to develop their confidence and resilience. Over time, their behaviour improves. Most pupils behave well and work hard in lessons.

Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe. They know that staff will resolve any issues, should they arise. Pupils are tolerant of each other's differences. They said that the rare instances of bullying are sorted out quickly and effectively.

Pupils' learning is enhanced by a wide range of trips. Pupils enjoy attending a local leisure centre where they go trampolining. They have access to a spacious outdoor area where they can play football. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about after-school clubs, such as the baking club.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum. Pupils follow a wide range of subjects. Pupils start at the school with large gaps in their education, often having suffered significant emotional trauma and considerable periods of time away from school. Leaders identify pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities accurately. They use pupils' individual education, health and care plans effectively to ensure that the curriculum is suitably adjusted to meet pupils' needs. This helps pupils to achieve well socially, emotionally and academically.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have reviewed the curriculum offer and improved curriculum planning in many subjects. Leaders have thought carefully about the knowledge they want pupils to learn and when. This means that pupils are able to catch up on lost learning in many subjects. However, in a few subjects, plans do not clearly identify the precise knowledge that pupils need to learn. This leads to gaps in pupils' learning.

In most subjects, teachers have secure knowledge to teach the curriculum content. Teachers use assessment strategies well to check that pupils remember what they have been taught. However, this is not true for all subjects. Some teachers are not as well equipped to deliver the planned curriculum. As a result, pupils do not acquire the knowledge that they need to build on their prior learning.

Leaders prioritise reading because they want pupils to become confident and fluent readers. Many pupils struggle with reading when they first start at the school. Staff are experienced in teaching phonics. They have also benefited from appropriate

training to deliver the early reading programme. Leaders have invested in high-quality texts. The books that pupils read match the sounds and words they are learning. Staff support pupils well to catch up.

Many pupils have high levels of disengagement when they start at the school. Leaders work closely with a wide range of specialists, including educational psychologists, to ensure that pupils get the support that they need. Staff speak to pupils sensitively and calmly when pupils show challenging behaviour. This helps to diffuse difficult situations so that pupils refocus on their learning.

The personal, health, social and economic (PSHE) education curriculum helps pupils to learn about the importance of healthy relationships. Pupils have opportunities to pay for goods at local shops. This helps them to prepare for adult life. Pupils regularly go orienteering and for walks in the surrounding countryside. These activities help them to develop their mental health and well-being.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. For example, pupils learn about other religions and celebrate Yom Kippur and Ramadan. Pupils also have the chance to represent their class on the school council. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

The proprietor body ensures that the school meets all of the required independent school standards (standards) and the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. A copy of the safeguarding policy is available on request or is posted on the company website. Pupils learn about relationships and sex education. Leaders ensure that pupils receive helpful, impartial careers advice and guidance. Staff support pupils well, for example in choosing GCSE and vocational courses when pupils start key stage 4 in their mainstream school.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They said that leaders care about their well-being and are conscious of their workload. The director of education knows the school well. The director of education holds leaders closely to account for the impact of their actions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is given high priority. There is a culture of vigilance. Staff have received suitable safeguarding training. They know how to spot potential signs of abuse or neglect and what to do if they think a pupil may be at risk. Leaders act on concerns quickly. They work effectively with a range of external agencies to get pupils the help and support that they need. Handover meetings at the start and end of each school day ensure that information is shared well between care and education staff. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when working online.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- The curriculum plans in some subjects lack precision about the knowledge that pupils should gain. In these subjects, some content does not build on what has been taught before. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge. Leaders should refine the plans for these subjects and ensure that the key knowledge pupils must gain is carefully ordered so that pupils can know more and remember more.
- Some staff do not have the subject knowledge that they need to deliver the curriculum content. This results in pupils not gaining the knowledge that they need to be successful in later learning. Leaders should ensure that staff receive subject-specific training. This will help staff to deepen their subject expertise and deliver a curriculum that enables pupils to build on their prior knowledge.

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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	140486
DfE registration number	351/6003
Local authority	Rossendale and Darwen
Inspection number	10203836
Type of school	Other Independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	5
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Halliwell Homes
Chair	Karen Mitchell-Mellor
Headteacher	Michael Hooper
Annual fees (day pupils)	£29,250
Telephone number	01706 827201
Website	www.halliwellhomes.co.uk/education
Email address	mike.hooper@halliwellhomes.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 to 16 November 2017

Information about this school

- The school is registered to admit up to nine girls and boys, aged between six and 14. There are currently five pupils on roll, four of whom have an education, health and care plan.
- The current headteacher was appointed in January 2021. He manages two other Halliwell schools. A lead teacher manages this school on an operational basis. The headteacher who was in post at the previous inspection is now director of education for Halliwell Homes.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

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.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, lead teacher, staff, the director of education and the proprietor. Inspectors held telephone calls with the virtual school headteacher and with social workers.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and observed their interactions during social times.
- Inspectors considered the four responses to the pupil survey and the four responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors checked the school's compliance with the standards. As part of this, inspectors toured the school's premises accompanied by leaders.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the single central record. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to check how effective safeguarding is in the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents such as school policies, risk assessments and behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography, mathematics and PSHE. Inspectors met with staff, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils about their learning. Inspectors also looked at

pupils' work and curriculum plans in history and science. Inspectors observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.

Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Rachel Goodwin

Her Majesty's Inspector

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