

High Grange School

Hospital Lane, Mickleover, Derbyshire DE3 0DR

Inspection dates

29 September – 1 October 2015

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for children and learners	Good
Sixth form provision	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders have created a strong sense of shared identity and mutual respect among staff and students.
- The school maintains an ethos of continuous improvement with an exemplary focus on improving teaching and the management of students' behaviour.
- Students of all ages develop positive attitudes to learning. Their behaviour and emotional resilience improve strongly over time.
- The school provides a safe and secure setting in which students are enabled to manage their individual anxieties.
- The quality of teaching is good and enables students to make rapid progress with their learning from a variety of starting points.
- Thorough arrangements for the assessment of students' progress enable staff to plan well for the next steps in their learning.
- The progress of disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs is improving towards nationally expected standards.
- Post-16 students are supported appropriately to improve their emotional maturity and academic success.
- The proprietor has established a strong leadership team and a well-qualified team of staff, together with excellent premises and accommodation. This has resulted in an environment in which students thrive.
- The school meets all the requirements of the independent school standards.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proprietor's management board is not sufficiently informed about the quality of teaching and students' progress.
- The analysis at whole-school level of students' progress over time is not sufficiently detailed to evaluate fully trends and variations between subjects and key stages.
- The quality of teaching is not outstanding. Students are not always guided sufficiently to reflect on and develop their oral contributions.
- There is not sufficient emphasis, in teaching and marking, on improving the quality of students' writing across all subjects.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
 - implementing a concerted whole-school approach to the improvement of students' written work
 - ensuring that students are always given sufficient time to reflect on and develop their ideas during oral work
 - further developing the best practice in marking to ensure that students are always clear about the next steps required to improve their work.
- Further develop the use of assessment data to inform leaders' decisions about areas of teaching and students' progress which require improvement.
- Strengthen the role of the proprietor's management board by:
 - working more closely with senior leaders to evaluate the quality of outcomes for students
 - ensuring that the activities and achievements of leaders, managers and staff are more fully understood and supported.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have established a culture of high expectations, commitment and dedication among the staff. Staff, in their responses to the inspection questionnaire, express considerable appreciation for the leadership and support demonstrated by the headteacher.
- Relationships throughout the school are characterised by mutual respect between staff and students. Staff have an excellent understanding of the characteristics of each student, their barriers to successful learning and how to motivate and encourage them. Students speak warmly about the support and consideration which they receive from staff.
- The performance of staff is managed well. Senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Staff are encouraged to communicate openly and to work together to improve the school, for example through the excellent work of the academic board.
- Senior leaders and staff work very effectively together to ensure that a suitable individual timetable is provided for each student. The quality of teaching is monitored effectively and staff are supported well with improvements to their classroom practice.
- Good attention is given to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. Students have a thorough understanding of fundamental British values, for example through their work in citizenship and personal and social education. They develop good awareness of public institutions and services and how they can make a positive contribution to the local and wider community.
- Themes in the curriculum, supported by excellent one-to-one counselling, enable students to understand issues of prejudice and equality and how to address these in their personal lives.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff are trained to a high standard in child protection and the management of behaviour. Arrangements for the recruitment and further training of staff are exemplary.
- A large majority of parents who responded to a school questionnaire and to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire believe that their children enjoy school, feel safe and are well looked after.
- Senior leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching is good. Improvements have had a positive impact on students' achievement since the last inspection. However, approaches to the improvement of students' handwriting and the impact of marking on students' future work are not yet implemented consistently.
- Excellent arrangements for the assessment of students' progress have been developed since the last inspection. Even so, the information gathered is not used precisely enough to identify whole-school trends and make comparisons between subjects and age groups.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The proprietor and management board are ambitious for students to succeed in their personal development and readiness for life beyond school.
 - They have provided high-quality facilities, including appropriate extensions to the premises, since the last inspection.
 - The management board meets regularly to review the work of the school and has ambitious plans for further improvement.
 - The work of the management board is not informed sufficiently by precise reporting from school leaders about the quality of teaching and its impact on students' progress.
- The school has clear policies and procedures for the prevention of bullying, the use of physical restraint and the management of complaints. School records and correspondence demonstrate correct implementation of policy and procedures. The school's actions in resolving any concerns expressed by students or parents are also appropriately informed by regular dialogue with the local authority designated officer.
- The proprietor and senior leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and an excellent understanding of the learning characteristics of each individual student. Staff are very skilled at planning tasks and activities which enable each individual

to learn in their own way and to make progress at a suitable pace.

- Teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve. They expect students to take part in discussion and to think through the details of their answers. Teachers, for example in lessons in English, music and science, continuously challenge students to think deeply. They reshape questions and encourage students to add to and develop the depth of thinking behind their oral responses.
- Students are provided with stimulating visual resources, for example in geography, art and Key Stage 2 literacy. Staff encourage them to 'put themselves in other people's shoes' and think about the emotions and reactions which they might experience – a challenging but necessary concept for students with autistic characteristics.
- Staff are mostly skilled at providing sufficient time for students to reflect on their answers during discussion and to process the new information and ideas presented. Occasionally, teachers talk too quickly or move on to new learning without allowing time to develop learning sufficiently.
- Students are provided with good opportunities for practical activities. These give them opportunities to take personal responsibility for managing their own safety. Practical learning in subjects such as design technology and in outdoor activities is well informed by suitable risk assessment.
- Students enjoy their learning and are keen to succeed, for example when developing their practical skill in using piano chords or developing individual dance routines. Excellent examples of students' art work are visible around the school, including creative murals in the dining room.
- Teaching assistants provide excellent support for students. In the great majority of lessons, they work effectively with students, often modelling good learning. This was seen, for example, in mathematics, where they completed tasks alongside students, explained ideas or helped students work out the best ways to record their answers.
- Provision for individual students is expertly informed by the work of the school's therapists and psychologists. Students become increasingly flexible, over time, in the range of learning styles and personal responses with which they feel confident. Classrooms are characterised by mutual respect and warm relationships between staff and students.
- Arrangements for the assessment of students' progress ensure that comprehensive information informs teachers' planning for successful learning. Teachers, through the use of appropriate assessment tasks, have an increasing understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the work of individual students.
- The quality of written reports to parents is excellent and informative. Similarly, teaching staff work very effectively with the school's therapists and psychologists to present comprehensive reviews of students' individual education and behaviour plans for annual review meetings.
- The quality of marking of students' work is regularly used to provide excellent advice about the next steps required to move on to a higher level. Some excellent work to support and challenge teachers has been completed through the academic board to improve the consistency of marking. However, the development of students' written work, including their handwriting, is not addressed consistently across all subjects and year groups.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote students' personal development and welfare is good. The school is an orderly community within which students state that they feel safe and respected.
- Students mostly enter the school with limited self-confidence and negative previous experiences of educational settings. The school is very successful at developing students' self-esteem and sense of achievement.
- Students develop respect and trust for adults throughout the school community. Over time, they increasingly learn to respect the contributions of their peers and how to support each other to achieve in practical ways.
- Students are able to identify substantial improvements in their behaviour, attitudes to learning and commitment to the school community since joining the school. Staff and parents, in their questionnaire responses, are clear about the improvements evident in students' personal development.
- Effective careers guidance, supported well by the local careers advisory service, provides students with appropriate choices and opportunities as they prepare for the transition to further education and employment.

- Students are provided with appropriate opportunities to develop independence and appropriate social skills. An externally accredited outdoor education scheme is popular with students and makes a strong contribution to their personal resilience and confidence.
- The school gives excellent attention to the safeguarding of students. All staff are trained to appropriate levels in child protection and senior staff have an effective relationship with the local authority designated officer, to whom any issues of concern are referred promptly and appropriately.
- All aspects of health and safety are underpinned by appropriate policies which are implemented effectively. Risk assessments are prepared and updated regularly, including those related to the needs of individual students, the safety of the premises and students' welfare on external visits. All aspects of fire safety are robust and suitably recorded.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and the ability to sustain their concentration throughout lessons.
- There is very little distraction or disruption to students' learning. Staff are skilled at anticipating the emotional reactions of individual students, any increased anxiety or declining concentration. The school's procedures for supporting students at times of personal crisis are implemented very effectively in a way that avoids disruption to the learning of others.
- Behaviour around the school is good. Students mix comfortably with staff and enjoy informal conversations and discussions during free time. Any use of inappropriate language is corrected by staff without confrontation or risk of escalation.
- Students have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying which they may meet in school and in society. Any incidents of bullying in school are managed well within the school's clear procedures. Records of any incidents and sanctions are comprehensive and take full account of the views of both perpetrators and victims.
- Staff are vigilant to ensure that all students understand and comply with the high standards required of them. They know the difficulties experienced by many students in forming strong relationships and understanding the feelings of others. Staff are quick to intervene to defuse any potential conflicts.
- Students' attendance is close to the national average; for many students this represents considerable improvement on their attendance at previous placements. There is very little unauthorised absence and staff work diligently to ensure that any risk of persistent absence is managed swiftly and appropriately.

The outcomes for children and learners

are good

- Students enter the school with levels of attainment which are mostly below those expected for their age as a result of previous negative experiences of school. They enter the school at a variety of ages, often late in Key Stage 3 or during Key Stage 4.
- Students make good progress across a wide range of subjects, from a variety of starting points.
- A higher proportion of students than nationally make or exceed expected rates of progress in English and mathematics. As a result, they are closing the gaps in achievement compared with other students nationally.
- Disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs also make good progress, particularly in reading, speaking, listening and aspects of mathematics and science.
- The number of students achieving success with GCSE, vocational and functional skills qualifications has increased annually since the last inspection. These successes have been extended to include a wider range of subjects.
- A small number of students have achieved outstanding success with GCSE higher-level qualifications and have advanced to challenging courses in further education.
- The school's accurate records of assessment show clearly that current students are making good progress across all key stages and subjects.
- Students benefit strongly from a range of work-experience placements and vocational courses, for example at local colleges of further education. Reports from these placements demonstrate the commitment of students and the progress they make towards suitable accreditation.
- The small number of students who have left the school to date have all moved on to appropriate courses of study or employment with training.

The sixth form provision

is good

- The sixth form provides valuable opportunities for students to consolidate and reinforce their earlier learning. A number of students are not ready to move on from school at 16; they benefit from a longer build-up to external accreditation.
- The curriculum in the sixth form reflects the structure and range of subjects experienced at Key Stage 4. For a small number of students, vocational training or part-time college courses supplement their school timetables.
- The content and structure of the sixth form curriculum takes appropriate account of students' individual social and emotional conditions. The additional time provided to complete courses and try new experiences is appropriately matched to their individual learning needs.
- Students continue to make good progress in their post-16 studies. They are provided with additional time to reinforce their learning in English and mathematics. Individual students demonstrate particular skills, for example in computing, music, art or drama. They work successfully towards external accreditation as they clarify the direction they wish to take on leaving school.
- Additional support is provided with careers guidance and planning for greater independence as students mature. The school works very successfully with the local careers service to prepare students for the transition on leaving school. Good attention is given to liaison with careers, education and employment services in the variety of authorities by whom students are placed at the school.
- Students are provided with suitable work experience, visits to colleges and employers, assistance with preparing letters of application and readiness for interviews.
- The majority of leavers to date have been from the post-16 cohort. All have continued into further education or employment with training.

School details

Unique reference number	136954
Inspection number	10006549
DfE registration number	830/6003

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Special school for students with autistic spectrum conditions
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8 to 19 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	9
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Rushcliffe Care Group
Chair	Mr Surjit Rai
Principal	Marisa Kelsall
Headteacher	Gavin Spicer
Annual fees (day pupils)	£72,141–97,603
Telephone number	01332 412777
Website	www.highgrangeschool.co.uk
Email address	katherine.rostron@highgrangeschool.co.uk
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 June 2012

Information about this school

- High Grange School opened in 2011 in purpose-built premises on the outskirts of Mickleover, Derby.
- The school is registered to provide full-time education for up to 50 students aged between eight and 19 years. It is also registered as a children's home for up to 36 students.
- There are currently 41 students on roll and all have education, health and care plans or statements of special educational needs.
- The school specialises in providing for students with autistic spectrum conditions and Asperger syndrome, together with associated communication and emotional difficulties.
- The school uses the services of Burton and South Derbyshire College and Leesbrook College to provide part-time placements for a small number of students.
- The previous inspection of the school was in June 2012. Since that time, the premises have been extended to include specialist teaching rooms for science, design and technology and vocational options.
- The residential provision is inspected and reported on separately; it was not inspected as part of this standard inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed students' learning and looked at samples of their work across a range of subjects and year groups. Much of the observation of teaching was undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Students' and parents' responses to a recent school questionnaire were taken into consideration in addition to 12 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire. A meeting was held with a group of five students and informal conversations with a number of others. The inspector also took account of 46 questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of school policies, procedures and records in order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- Conversations were held with the proprietor's management board, senior leaders and staff with a variety of management responsibilities.
- The Department for Education commissioned Ofsted to look at aspects of the school's performance outlined in three complaints since the school's previous inspection. These complaints related to the school's implementation of policies for the prevention of bullying, the use of physical restraint and the management of complaints.

Inspection team

David Young, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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