

Inspection of The William Henry Smith School and Sixth Form

Boothroyd, Brighouse, West Yorkshire HD6 3JW

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at The William Henry Smith School and Sixth Form benefit hugely from an array of experiences designed to enrich and nurture their understanding of the world. Pupils are happy because all adults take the time to understand and help them. Activities are tailored to pupils' interests. During our visit, pupils enjoyed telling inspectors about activities involving the school farm, quad biking and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

The school is a calm, tranquil place. The environment is designed to ensure pupils can learn in surroundings suited to their needs. Behaviour is excellent. Relationships between teachers and pupils are incredibly strong. Pupils are not worried about bullying, but they know that adults would deal with it if they were.

Pupils have aspirations beyond life at the school because they are constantly encouraged through a curriculum that focuses on enhancing their quality of life; this includes academic, social and emotional development. Pupils in Year 11 and in the sixth form are given expert help and advice to ensure they can access courses tailored to their interests and skills. Work experience is carefully planned and designed.

Success is engineered in all aspects of pupils' lives because adults take account of the special educational needs of the boys in every aspect of the work they do.

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

Teamwork is the underpinning principle of life at The William Henry Smith School and Sixth Form. Therapeutic, teaching, catering, behaviour, safeguarding, site and support staff work closely and share information successfully to design a curriculum that develops pupils in all aspects of their lives. For example, many staff are trained to deliver the school's phonics programme. Phonics lessons are tailored to individual starting points through detailed assessment when pupils enter the school. When considering the books that pupils read, teachers focus on aspects around social routines and emotions. Speech and language therapists work with leaders for literacy and phonics to ensure that barriers around communication do not hinder progress in reading. In all aspects of the school, this type of teamwork is evident. This approach ensures rewarding experiences for pupils.

Leaders' work to understand and support pupils is exceptional. Pupils regularly have a voice through the quality-of-life questionnaires that staff conduct. This leads to strategic decisions at whole-school, whole-class and pupil level. For example, the 'WHSS Bacc' ensures that pupils moving into Year 9 and above complete courses and study subjects that will help them to develop academically and socially. It forms part of a detailed personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. All pupils access the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Term-time holidays take place to broaden pupils' experiences of the world. Subject curriculums are continually evolving to meet the needs of pupils. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic,

pupils' physical development was affected. For younger children, the physical development and healthy lifestyles curriculum has since been adapted to focus on developing pupils' core strength to support their physical development.

The teamwork ethos continues in approaches to behaviour. All pupils have a positive behaviour support plan that has important information about how to support them. For example, pupils have dedicated therapy sessions every week. The learning from these plans helps staff to plan for specific approaches. Inspectors saw these plans enacted with a patient, calm, nurturing approach. Pupils know that adults want to protect and help them. Pupils' needs mean that, on occasion, behaviour can become challenging. When this happens, detailed reviews are undertaken to examine how to make improvements to the plans in place. This information is shared with all staff. New approaches are adopted as a result.

Leaders constantly strive to make improvements for pupils. For example, a communication and interaction unit has recently been set up to support those pupils who need more support in this area. Occupational health leaders ensure that the environment pupils work in helps to support their progress. This has led to the development of an inspiring school site where pupils can learn in surroundings that meet the differing needs of all.

Careers provision and advice are exceptional. Pupils are encouraged to speak to adults they encounter about their jobs. They complete work experience, which is planned very well. Pupils in the sixth form complete courses at local colleges that are designed to help them progress into successful careers. School leaders enhance this through the personal development curriculum they deliver at school. The achievements of former pupils are celebrated and used as inspiration for current pupils.

Staff are incredibly proud to work here. They receive regular training, including for safeguarding, which encourages them to help the school constantly progress. Several members of staff are completing national professional qualifications. On Fridays, staff participate in social activities. These are hugely important to staff. Leaders are approachable and responsive. An open, questioning culture is apparent throughout the school. This fosters a desire to identify and improve systems and processes to build on the already impressive work that takes place. Governors have a clear view of the school, and leaders actively seek challenge and external advice to help them constantly improve. Leaders also participate in activities with other local special schools to spread their knowledge and expertise in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) into the mainstream sector.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	107589
Social care unique reference number	SC001038
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10289936
Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	8
Number of boarders on roll	23
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Roger Tilbrook
Principal	Sue Ackroyd
Website	www.whsschool.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a non-maintained residential and day special school for up to 87 boys. All of the pupils have an education, health and care plan that categorises social, emotional and mental health as their primary need.
- There are currently 78 pupils on roll. Although the school accepts pupils of Reception age, the youngest pupils are currently in Year 2. The oldest pupils are in Year 13. Some of the pupils also use the school's residential provision.
- For pupils in the sixth form, a large part of their education is provided by local colleges. Leaders at the school work with leaders from the colleges to assure themselves about the provision these boys receive. The boys remain on roll to

support the transition to college, to benefit from the school's work around personal development, and to receive additional support for literacy and numeracy where this is appropriate.

- The school does not use any alternative providers of education.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the school's residential provision. Inspectors carried out some inspection activities and held some meetings with leaders jointly with the inspector of the residential provision.
- Inspectors met with the principal and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with trustees and governors, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, PSHE, and physical development and healthy lifestyles. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, reviewed curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of work.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils both formally and informally and observed social times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; spoke to staff about the training they receive; spoke to those responsible for safeguarding about systems to keep children safe; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Matthew Vellensworth, lead inspector His Majesty's Inspector

Pauline Rowland Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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