

# Valley House

Nuneaton Road, Fillongley, Warwickshire CV7 8DL

## Inspection dates

3–5 October 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Sixth form provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Satisfactory

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Valley House is a good and improving school. It has a clearly defined focus to meet the mental health needs of pupils. It provides a very effective bridge, allowing pupils to use the school provision as a stepping-stone, to build up their confidence and skills so that they can access mainstream or special school provision.
- Multi-disciplinary teamwork is a strong feature of the school. This allows a wide range of pupils' needs to be addressed so they are more receptive to learning.
- Pupils increasingly engage positively in lessons and speak proudly of their improvements. Pupils feel safe and find stability in school, allowing them to flourish.
- Teaching is good. Staff are excellent at coaxing pupils to develop their self-esteem. Staff are flexible in their approach and know how to get the best from pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour and personal development is outstanding. Considering the often difficult previous experiences pupils have undergone this is impressive.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through subjects and experiences, such as visits to local places of interest and further afield.
- The outcomes for pupils are good. They achieve a range of nationally recognised qualifications. Some pupils are able to move on to other schools successfully.
- The sixth-form provision meets pupils' needs well. Staff prepare students well for the next stage of their education or employment and training.
- The leadership and management of the school are good. There has been a successful drive to improve teaching, pupils' behaviour and outcomes. This has been fruitful and ensured that the independent school standards are met.
- In some lessons, the most able pupils are not always challenged enough and this slows their progress.
- The educational premises, while adequate, could be improved, as they are cramped and do not allow some aspects of the curriculum to be delivered on site, or pupils to work in quiet areas or in small groups.

### 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 accommodation to meet the needs of pupils better and improve the delivery of some practical subjects such as science and technology.
- Ensure teaching provides maximum scope to stretch the most able pupils, for example by ensuring tasks challenge them more and questioning probes and extends their thinking to accelerate their progress.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The school meets all the independent school standards.
- The headteacher and the proprietor have implemented an ambitious culture for the school, which has had a positive effect on the aspirations of staff and pupils' outcomes.
- The school has improved well since the last inspection. The headteacher, in conjunction with an effective team, has brought about rapid improvements. The school now has a clear focus on the type of needs it is able to meet successfully. There have been improvements to the fabric of the school, the quality of teaching, the level of care provided and the curriculum. Staff meet the needs of pupils effectively.
- There are very effective partnerships with other schools, so that pupils access appropriate lessons that are suited to their abilities and needs. Partnership working with other professionals is also very effective in helping to support pupils' health, social, emotional and educational needs. As a result, pupils thrive while at the school.
- The use of an external consultant has been valuable in bringing both rigour and challenge to the work of the school. The school has good capacity to improve further.
- The leaders and managers of the school go above and beyond to meet the needs of pupils and this has included waiving fees for particular pupils who are in crisis.
- Comments from local authorities indicate confidence in the school's work and the improvements that have occurred since the previous inspection. Similarly, parents and carers have positive views of the school.
- The school's self-evaluation provides an accurate picture of its current performance and improvement plans set out appropriate priorities for further improvement.
- The curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of pupils, with valuable vocational opportunities provided to pupils. Pupils follow a range of purposeful courses, both on and off the school site. The curriculum enables pupils to take academic and vocational qualifications and achieve success, which boosts their self-confidence and prepares them well for their next steps in education or employment and training. Pupils take part in activities outside of school, which has a positive impact on their personal and social development.
- Staff are supportive of the school's leadership. They say that the school is improving rapidly and recognise the positive changes that have been implemented.
- Effective arrangements are in place to monitor the quality of teaching and provide feedback to staff to improve practice further.
- The school is a caring, respectful and tolerant community. Each pupil is fully embraced regardless of background, gender, ethnicity or need. Staff demonstrate this ethos and pupils adopt similar positive attitudes and values.
- The school receives a small amount of pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils. Staff use this funding to enable students to attend further education courses and to use information technology to help support their learning.

- Careers education guidance and work-related opportunities are provided for pupils wherever appropriate. Some pupils undertake volunteering opportunities and benefit from these experiences.
- The current educational premises are adequate but small. The available indoor space does not easily allow pupils to work in quieter areas or in small groups, or for some aspects of the curriculum to be delivered easily onsite, such as technology and practical science experiments. Good use is made of the school's extensive grounds to support pupils' learning.

## **Governance**

- Young Foundations provide governance of the school, which has specific responsibility for safeguarding. Managers from Young Foundations make regular visits and meet with senior leaders to check the progress of school developments and resolve any concerns.
- The operational director provides an appropriate level of challenge and support for the headteacher and is involved in strategic decision-making. He has a good working knowledge of the school and understands its strengths and where improvements are needed.
- Young Foundations makes suitable input into the school's self-evaluation and development planning processes. Previous weaknesses in provision have been addressed and suitably qualified staff are employed.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and there is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are aware of the vulnerabilities of pupils and are attuned to changes in their mood or behaviour, which may be a cause for concern.
- Staff are knowledgeable and know how to recognise potential indicators of different types of abuse so that they can seek help quickly. They receive regular training to keep themselves up to date. All the proper checks on staff and visitors are carried out and recorded.
- The designated safeguarding lead is appropriately trained at a higher level and retrains every two years. Additional senior leaders are also trained to the required level. The school works closely with other agencies to ensure pupils are safe and protected. There is an up-to-date safeguarding policy on the school's website.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Relationships between staff and pupils are trusting and supportive and this helps to get the best out of pupils. Staff are endlessly encouraging and this helps to promote pupils' positive attitudes to learning. As pupils start to feel more confident, they begin to flourish academically and personally.
- Staff are very sensitive to the needs of pupils and encourage them to engage in lessons. Staff understand that pupils' moods can fluctuate from day to day, affecting their receptiveness for learning.

- The teaching of core skills is good. Learning is often practical and is made meaningful and relevant to pupils. For example, when teaching money management skills, pupils learn how to order and pay for a takeaway meal over the phone, working out timings, costs and change.
- In literacy, less-able pupils use symbols to help them understand simple instructions. The most able pupils develop their creative writing skills and proofread their work. They use information and communication technology well to enable them to research topics and draft their work.
- Pupils enjoy vocational activities such as horticulture. They know how to make hanging baskets and to crop potatoes. For many pupils this is often a therapeutic experience.
- Teaching is regularly geared around subject matter that interests pupils. For example, one pupil was particularly motivated by baking and this topic was used to teach a range of literacy and numeracy skills.
- Increasingly, pupils' positive attitudes to learning make a strong contribution to the good quality of teaching and learning. This means that lessons proceed with minimal disruption and pupils sustain their concentration well.
- Staff carefully consider transitional arrangements to enable the most able pupils to access education in other schools on a full- or part-time basis. Pupils are supported initially by staff and eventually they attend unsupported.
- On occasions in lessons, tasks are not challenging enough to stretch pupils fully. Similarly, the pitch of teachers' questioning does not tease out thoughtful responses from the most able pupils.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils develop positive attitudes to staff, one another and their learning. They benefit from positive relationships that help to develop their self-confidence well. One pupil commented, 'I like school. I think it is good because it is practical. It makes me learn in a different way.' Another student said, 'This school is like no other, with a chilled-out environment while gaining qualifications.' Pupils develop higher aspirations for their future as they start to experience success in achieving qualifications.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe at school and trust staff enough to confide in them with any concerns. Pupils did not report any incidents of bullying, but they know who to turn to should they need help.
- Effective multi-disciplinary teamwork helps pupils to become more emotionally resilient and to be better prepared for learning.
- Pupils show respect and politeness to staff and visitors and they take pride in their work.
- The curriculum teaches pupils to keep themselves safe in various situations, such as when online, and to conduct appropriate relationships.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly. Through visits, for example to a monastery, pupils extend their experiences and develop a good understanding of other cultures and beliefs. The school's curriculum makes sure they are prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils learn to become responsible citizens through participation in regular meetings, where they make their views known and make suggestions for improvement. This forum gives pupils a voice and develops their sense of responsibility.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils make rapid improvements to their behaviour as they find their feet in school. Lessons are calm and purposeful and pupils are determined learners.
- Rare non-compliant behaviour is skilfully managed and pupils learn to reflect on their feelings more positively.
- Attendance for pupils has improved vastly. A significant number of pupils have 100% attendance and this is evidence of how much they enjoy school. Some pupils have a reduced timetable due to their mental health issues, but start to increase their time in lessons as they feel more confident.
- Weekly tutorials help pupils to reflect on their progress and share any areas of concern. Pupils gather together at the start of the day in a relaxed and informal way and this time is used to build relationships and to reinforce positive messages. Strong pastoral support help pupils to self-manage their emotions and behaviour more appropriately.

## Outcomes for pupils

### Good

- At this school, foundations are laid that enable pupils to feel more secure and confident. Pupils settle into the school rapidly, often having previously suffered from difficult experiences in their life or education. As a result, pupils make good progress. Pupils achieve a good range of externally accredited qualifications in a wide range of academic and vocational subjects, boosting their self-esteem.
- Staff and leaders track pupils' progress regularly to check that they are making good progress from their starting points and if not, how any obstacles to their learning can be minimised.
- The most able pupils achieve high-level GCSE examination grades in a wide range of subjects in local schools and then move on to further education placements.
- Work in pupils' books is in line with their capabilities and is presented to a good standard that confirms sustained good progress over time.
- Pupils enjoy vocational subjects, particularly small animal care, catering and recreational activities and achieve accredited awards.
- Pupils in receipt of the pupil premium make equivalent progress to their peers. Funding has been used to provide access to appropriate college courses and computer equipment effectively.

- An important measure of success for the school is the ability of pupils to access education in other schools or local further education colleges. This it achieves well. Pupils are effectively prepared for their next stage of life and the school goes above and beyond to help them transition successfully to other schools or colleges.

### **16-19 study programmes**

**Good**

- The post-16 provision is well led and managed. Its major strength is the flexibility to meet each student's individual needs effectively, and to offer bespoke programmes of study that are adapted and relevant.
- There is a strong emphasis on English, mathematics and students' personal development. Students follow courses to enable them to achieve vocational and academic qualifications.
- Teaching is very effective and based on a secure understanding of students' abilities. Teaching focuses on functional and practical aspects and preparing students for their next stage of life.
- Students have positive attitudes to learning and complete their courses, unless external factors intervene.
- Students are well prepared for their next stage of education with good levels of support available to help them transition successfully. Students receive good careers and education advice, which helps to raise their aspirations, for example running a café, or working on a cruise ship. Work-related experiences provide valuable opportunities to develop students' inter-personal and work-related skills.

## School details

Unique reference number	135259
DfE registration number	937/6105
Inspection number	10006087

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	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	12 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	4
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	1
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Young Foundations
Chair	Tom Ellison
Headteacher	Emma Gillin
Annual fees (day pupils)	£37,500 (dependent on need)
Telephone number	01676 542 875
Website	<a href="http://youngfoundations.com">youngfoundations.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@youngfoundations.com">info@youngfoundations.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	7 November 2012

## Information about this school

- Valley House is a small school in Warwickshire catering for up to six residential pupils. It is located in rural accommodation owned by Young Foundations Limited.
- It was first registered in May 2007 as a school providing for up to six students aged from 12 to 18 years. The needs of pupils have changed since the last inspection and the school now offers transitional 'step down' arrangements for pupils with social, emotional and



mental health issues, many of whom have been discharged from hospital provision. There are currently five pupils on roll. One student is in the sixth form.

- Some pupils attend part time and are on roll at other educational providers. All pupils have either an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. All are children looked after.
- The school's last standard inspection took place in November 2012, when it was judged satisfactory in all areas, apart from the welfare, health and safety of pupils, where it was judged inadequate. Progress monitoring visits subsequently took place in 2013 and 2014. The last monitoring inspection judged the school to meet all the independent school standards.
- The current headteacher took up her post in August 2015.
- The school does not make any use of alternative providers.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- This standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed six parts of lessons, some of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Pupils' work, staff surveys, annual reports and other records were scrutinised.
- The school's documentation was examined, including planning for subjects, records of pupils' progress and the welfare and safeguarding of pupils. The inspector checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.
- The views of pupils were sought through individual discussions.
- There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, for these to be considered. The views of parents and carers were gained through written comments from parents.

## Inspection team

Frank Price, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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